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PÜCKLER IN GENERAL'S UNIFORM.

THE TEMPESTUOUS PRINCE

HERMANN PÜCKLER-MUSKAU

by

E. M. BUTLER

"Prince Pückler Muskau,
(what a name for a fairy tale)....."

Westminster Review

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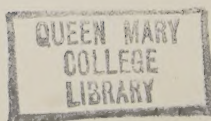
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To
PÜCKLER-MUSKAU
AND
C. Y. F.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

My warmest thanks are due to Mrs Scott-Gatty for her invaluable help in reading the proofs for this book.

AN INTRODUCTION

PRINCE PÜCKLER-MUSKAU is far too brilliant a figure to require an apology ; but he may stand in need of an introduction, for his name will stir no memories in the minds of most English readers, and the thought-associations aroused are almost certain to be grotesque : pickles, perhaps, and Moscow, leading to caviare on a false scent. A glance at the *Encyclopædia Britannica* will give a vague impression of an obscure German prince who lived from 1785 to 1871, and who, in spite of a certain reputation as a writer in his own day, has not outlived his times.

But the hero of this book, dead, alas, in the flesh, is still eminently fit to survive in the spirit. Some three years ago the pages of a yellowing volume were cut open by the present writer, and a voice rang out into the air of a summer afternoon, insistent, urgent, arresting the attention, enlisting the sympathies, and demanding with all the energy of a living and powerful personality to be brought back to the minds of men, whence he should never have disappeared. There was no gainsaying that voice : the machinery of research was set in motion ; books long since out of print were discovered ; old newspapers and journals yielded up their buried treasures. Some unforgettable months were spent in the Manuscript Department of the Berlin State Library,

where the unpublished letters of Pückler-Muskau more than justified his claims to a spellbound reader, who would satisfy them now.

This book is addressed to the generous and the tolerant ; to those who admire courage and a gallant bearing, and for whom aristocracy and chivalry are still inspiring ideals ; to those who are in love with life and all its manifestations, who can laugh with a rogue and companion a rake ; to the adventurers, restlessly conscious of the pull towards the periphery of the circle of existence and even beyond ; to such as know the human heart and the greatness of its travail ; to others who may delight in the complicated workings of a subtle and eccentric mind ; to the artists who sacrifice to beauty. Finally, and in a special sense, it is addressed to the few whose outlook on life is tragic, and who are aware that man is greater than his fate.

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ERRATUM

P. 52, l. 19, for *légataire* read *légateur*.

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THE TEMPESTUOUS PRINCE

CHAPTER I

THE LINE OF LIFE

PRINCE Hermann Ludwig Heinrich Pückler-Muskau was not of royal blood. His was not the supreme misfortune to be born one of those innumerable petty princelings whose life, in nineteenth-century Germany, was one of fashionable *fainéantisme* hedged round by etiquette and enlivened with intrigue. His ancestors, raised to the baronetage in 1580, became Counts of the Empire in 1690 and were of an ancient lineage whose origin is lost in the mists of the Middle Ages. The founder of the race was popularly supposed to be the semi-mythical, semi-historical Rüdiger of Bechlarn on the Danube, whose painful destiny it was in the *Nibelungenlied* to keep faith with a woman at the cost of loyalty to his friends. In vain did he plead with the merciless Criemhild :

“ich swuor iu, edel wîp,
daz ich durch iuch wâgte die êre und ouch den lîp :
daz ich die sêle vliese, des enhân ich niht gesworn.
zuo dirre hôchgezite braht *ich* die fûrsten wol
geborn.”

She held him to his oath of allegiance, forcing him to give battle with his five hundred men to the hard-

pressed Nibelungs, his erstwhile guests and sworn kinsmen. With horror the Sons of the Mist saw him enter the charnel-house, where they faced their awful doom and heard his warning that their friendship was at an end. In the ensuing parley Hagen deplored the loss of his shield; Rüdiger tendered his own; greatly moved, Hagen the hard and the grim swore to spare its owner in the fight. Then the massacre of a race of heroes began anew, and Rüdiger fell at last, one of the noblest victims to Criemhild's revenge.

The derivation of Pückler through Bechlarn and Pöchlarn is not in itself improbable; the descent, which has been much disputed, cannot be proved, since it reaches back beyond genealogical records, but it has a strong tradition behind it, supported by the Pückler coat of arms, displaying an eagle, which was borne in the ninth century by Pellegrin, Bishop of Passau and Archbishop of Lorch, who claimed to be a descendant of Rüdiger.

Such scanty family documents and chronicles as remain depict a stout-hearted, God-fearing and prolific race, kept within reasonable bounds by a high infant mortality due to carelessness, measles, fevers and dropsy. A marked tendency to longevity in the men was counteracted by accidents and strokes; but their wives, worn out with incessant child-bearing, rarely lived to be old. Hans Pückler of Groditz (1562-1638) begat twenty children by three wives, and did the grand tour of Italy, France and England. He had an audience with Queen Elizabeth and was summoned to the royal table, where he saw "stately things." He sacrificed large sums of money to

enable his two eldest sons to travel likewise, but he was not an over-indulgent sire. When Wenzel refused to return home, and remained in Orleans squandering his substance and accumulating debts, Hans let the prodigal rot in prison for five years and four months from pure "paternal zeal." Wenzel came back eventually with a French wife, Maria Cusin de Marmoyne :

. . . a pious, honour-loving, God-fearing woman, as many can bear witness ; for my sake she rejected many distinguished suitors and left her own beautiful fatherland for our corrupt, unhappy country because of the chaste regard she bore me. Therefore may the eternal God be gracious, mercifully granting her soul sweet sleep in the grave and thereafter a blessed resurrection into eternal life.¹

The feckless, roving Wenzel had clearly a gentle heart. His sister Helene seems to have possessed second sight. Stricken with measles at the age of twenty-one she prophesied her own imminent death :

. . . also announced : "Sir Father, your second wife, my lady step-mother, will not be long in following me, whom I shall bless on Monday."²

And indeed the "lady step-mother" was dead within four months. Augustus Sylvius Pückler of Groditz, Count of the Empire (1657-1748), attained the ripe old age of ninety. His fifth child, later his eldest son, Erdmann I. (1687-1742), became Baron of Branitz and the founder of the Lusatian branch

¹ Augustus Sylvius Pückler, *Familienchronik und Urkundenbuch*, Breslau, 1860.

² *Ibid.*

of Pücklers, to which Pückler-Muskau belonged. Erdmann had a robust constitution—he fell down a whole flight of stairs when he was four without sustaining the slightest injury or showing a single bruise; a year later he survived a “double putrid tertiary fever.” But he was not fated to outlive his father, whom he predeceased by six years, dying at the age of fifty-four. Such were Hermann’s paternal ancestors.

The Counts of Callenberg at Muskau, his mother’s family, a gay, quick-blooded, fiery-tempered race, were also of respectable antiquity; but his maternal grandmother was French, a Countess de la Tour du Pin-Montauban in the Dauphiné. This marriage was considered a *mésalliance* by the German nobility, the French aristocracy being notoriously lax on the subject of pedigree wives. Hermann’s father could prove fifty quarterings, for Wenzel was not in the direct line, yet he was later unable to have his son made a Knight of the Teutonic Order of Saint John. But Muskau was no negligible dowry. Ludwig Johannes Carl Erdmann II., Count Pückler at Branitz, swallowed the gilded pill and allied himself, on December 28, 1784, with due pomp and circumstance, to Clementine Cunigunde Charlotte Olympia Luise, Countess of Callenberg, and mistress of Muskau, as lively as a monkey, as pretty as paint, and rich into the bargain, but not an heiress by any means in the strictly heraldic sense.

She had other defects as well, notably her tender years. When she gave birth to Hermann on Sunday, October 30, 1785, as the Muskau church clock was

striking twelve,¹ she was only fifteen years older than her baby, who was thirty years younger than his sire. The husband and wife were an ill-assorted couple. The birth of four more children—Clementine, Bianca, Agnes, and a second son, Charles, who died in infancy—did nothing to reconcile the parents; for ever at odds with each other, they were divorced in 1799.

Their eldest son, a beautiful, high-spirited and warm-hearted boy, was relegated to the care of domestic servants and inferior tutors. His paternal grandfather, who attained the age of eighty-nine, contributed little to the happiness of his grandson; but the old Count of Callenberg, at whose birth the first nightingale had been heard singing in the Muskau grounds, and who lived to see ninety-six, loved his little descendant even when he boxed his ears. Delighted with his childish retorts and witticisms, he once presented Hermann one by one with all the coins in his purse, then bundled him out of the room, crying in mock wrath: "Devil take the youngster, I shan't have a penny to bless myself with if he stays here a moment longer!" What his grandfather did in jest, his parents did in earnest; at the age of five he was temporarily banished from the house because he was such an intolerable nuisance. And indeed forty years later the Earl of Darnley remembered what a young limb of Satan he had been at the age of three. Locked up in a turret by his harassed tutor, Tamms, he threatened to fling himself into the moat if he were not instantly released. Tamms decided to risk it, and

¹ Pückler sometimes said that he was born at midnight; towards the end of his life he said that it was at noon.

an ill-omened calm ensued. Hermann was fashioning a puppet of straw in his own likeness and dressing it up in his clothes. When evening fell he threw it with a sickening splash into the moat. There was a panic amongst the servants. Boats and boat-hooks were requisitioned; finally the dripping dummy was hauled up out of the water. A mocking peal of laughter rang out from the turret. Hermann and Tamms were quits.

Faced with the results of their parental negligence, the Count and Countess Pückler packed off the disturber of the peace to the Herrnhut Institution at Uhyst, where he remained sequestered for five long years. At the Academy of Halle, whither he was transferred at the age of twelve, he was still completely unmanageable. After an eventful year he and Hardenberg's grandson were expelled as joint-authors of a lampoon on that gay and lively lady the Chancellor Niemeyer's wife. A tutor was hastily engaged to accompany the graceless lad to Dessau, where he attended the town school for some months; then he returned to Muskau and the charms of family life.

The old Count Callenberg was dead; the young Countess Pückler had been divorced from her husband and was now married to a former flame, Count Carl Seydewitz, a Bavarian major-general. Hermann, once more in the hands of rapidly changing tutors, rode on horseback or ran wild over the estate, looked longingly at the locked bookcases in his father's library, and created a sensation by his personal beauty and histrionic gifts during some theatricals

at the castle. At the age of seventeen he was dispatched to the University of Leipzig with instructions to read for the law, under the care of a new tutor—an out-and-out scoundrel this time, who was personally unknown to the head of the family. So little reading was done that even the wild young undergraduate, with a duel already to his credit, began to feel some uneasiness. He wrote to his father that he was too young for a university career; he was wasting his money and his time. Might he not go to France for a year on a visit to his maternal uncle, in order to polish his manners and perfect his French? For he felt himself to be painfully deficient in both these branches of culture, so necessary to the diplomatic career for which he was intended.

Pückler senior did not grant this request; his divorced wife's French connections were anathema to him. His son thereupon ran away to Dresden, where he purchased a commission in a crack cavalry regiment, the famous Red Lifeguards, a relic of the good old days of Augustus the Strong. Only the tall and the handsome were admitted; but Hermann fully satisfied both conditions, and was soon promoted from lieutenant to captain of horse. A gay, mad life this dashing young cavalry officer made of it, playing all manner of queer pranks: vaulting with incredible daring over the parapet of the great bridge into the Elbe on horseback and swimming ashore, to the amazement of the assembled crowd; living in a whirl of popularity and pleasure until he was forced by his debts to resign his commission and fly from the town. His father, meanwhile, scandalised by the

stories which now began to circulate, and touched on the raw by the debts which he was called upon to settle, took what steps were in his power to disinherit the fugitive.

Fortunately Hermann came of age in time to thwart this fatherly scheme. He had escaped to Vienna in September 1804, after posting through Saxony, his servant on the box armed with a brandy bottle in one hand, a horsewhip in the other, and having orders to mete out either punishment or reward as the lazy and drunken postilion might require. Several years were spent in Vienna, frequenting the gay world, for young Pückler, having also reached his intellectual majority, stubbornly refused to come home. He lived in a more economical fashion than he had done in Dresden and modified his flamboyant behaviour; but he managed to arouse the impassioned enmity of a certain Count Colleredo-Mansfeld, who had seconded a Prince Löwenstein-Wertheim in a duel with Pückler, which had been amicably settled on the ground. The two principals agreed to leave Vienna at once, but Hermann was unable to do so owing to the non-appearance of his quarterly allowance. Colleredo thereupon insulted him publicly and refused satisfaction until the affair with Löwenstein should be settled. In vain did Pückler thrash him soundly in the presence of friends. Colleredo remained violently abusive but did not accept his challenge. The affair dragged on for several months. The newspapers would not publish Pückler's statement; finally he printed a number of leaflets privately and distributed them broadcast. He then set out on a walking tour

through Switzerland, the south of France, and Italy, under the plebeian cognomen of "Secretary Hermann," for his allowance was so inadequate that he feared to disgrace his name. But being recognised in Rome, he was obliged to take his place in society again. He was blessed by the Pope, and witnessed an eruption of Vesuvius; later he visited Strassburg and Paris. He tried hard to persuade his father to send him to the theatre of war in Spain with the Red Lifeguards, but unsuccessfully; he was forced at last to return to Muskau and "le ci-devant mari de ma mère" in the summer of 1810. His father's death on January 10, 1811, liberated him from irksome control.

He was now lord of Muskau, Groditz and Branitz, sovereign ruler over some forty-five villages, with his own court of justice and clerical court. The speech which he made on his accession breathed tolerance, enlightenment and good will; it won him many hearts; and indeed the disaffection of his subjects was an unpleasantness which he was never called upon to face. But his new duties, which he took with becoming seriousness, soon gave way before the national crisis of the War of Liberation in 1813.

When the Russians entered Berlin, on the conclusion of the Moscow campaign, Pückler rushed forward with an offer to raise a corps of volunteers in Lusatia. He waited some time for an answer from Alexander, and then solicited General Wittgenstein to be allowed to serve in his *suite*. Barely recovered from an inopportune attack of typhus, he was making his way to the allied headquarters when he met the French invading his estates, and shortly afterwards

the battle of Bautzen terminated this phase of the campaign.

During the armistice General Berthier quartered troops on Muskau, who wantonly laid waste the property, whilst typhus, raging in the villages, caused hundreds of deaths. When the fighting was resumed Pückler went to Bautzen to obtain relief for his subjects; he crossed Napoleon's path, and was arrested and examined on the part he had played in Berlin. Haled as a political criminal before one authority after another, he fell in with an old acquaintance, General Radet, then Grand Provost of the army, who released him on *parole*. The battle of Leipzig set him free and he then became *aide-de-camp* to the Grand Duke of Weimar. He distinguished himself with the Bülow army corps at Antwerp, with the English at Merxen and with the Russians under General Geismar. He seized six enemy cannon at Cassel and conveyed them to Tournay. He was supposed to have fought a duel with a French colonel of the Hussars who had outdistanced his front, and whom Pückler engaged whilst the respective armies awaited the issue; the German unseated his adversary but forbore to take his life.¹ He accomplished other gallant feats, and became military governor of Bruges. At the conclusion of the war he retired with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and several orders; he was sent to Paris by the Grand Duke of Weimar as a courier to the Emperor Alexander. He then visited England in the *suite* of the King of Prussia, and

¹ Pückler denied the truth of this tale to Paul Wesenfeld towards the end of his life.

became the boon companion of the Duke of York. At one convivial meeting the company were rather unsteadily trying their skill with various Eastern weapons when the Duke and Count Meerveldt scratched themselves on a sword. Meerveldt then plunged the room in darkness in an effort to cut a lighted candle in half. As they groped blindly about, the Duke's *aide-de-camp* was heard to stammer piteously: "By God, sir, I remember the sword is poisoned!" The wounded gentlemen experienced a disagreeable shock, but on investigation it was happily found that the statement was due to claret and that no other poison was involved. Pückler returned from England with a stud of race-horses and some English jockeys. He is said to have introduced horse-racing in Vienna, where he certainly won a big event for stakes to the value of £7000 with his horse Sledmere. Unable to attend the Congress of Vienna owing to illness, he was back in Muskau in 1815.

He was now a well-known figure in Berlin society, with a growing reputation for eccentricity and daring. His feats of horsemanship contributed to a legend which he fostered assiduously, for he loved to be the talk of the town. He adopted an extravagant costume, harnessed four reindeer to his carriage, drew up in some conspicuous place and immersed himself in a book. He mounted with Reichardt in a balloon in September 1817, having supplied the costs of the expedition, whilst all Berlin assembled to gape and exclaim. Pückler inherited a strong tendency to play practical jokes from his eighteenth-century progenitors. When Lord Darnley and the Duke of

Portland stayed at Muskau, in 1787 or thereabouts, the whole house-party dressed up as ghosts in broad daylight in order to terrify a credulous fellow-guest. They surprised him practising figures on a frozen lake near the castle and caused him to perform some remarkable impromptu steps. The then lord of Muskau continued this uproarious tradition. He persuaded a respectable pastor to change his wet clothes for female garments in the shooting-lodge, lured him into his carriage, and then drove full tilt through the whole district, to the edification of the wretched clergyman's parishioners. A mad prank; but here is a madder one. Knowledge of the works and personality of Hoffmann added a grotesque and *macabre* element to this elaborate hoax. Invitations were issued in the provincial Press to a masked ball at Muskau; the evening came, the guests arrived; not so the host, who was reported to be ill. Confusion reigned during the dances, the musicians changing abruptly from one rhythm to another; further embarrassment, caused by the unfamiliar English arrangements. Supper at last; benches covered with moth-eaten black draperies; murmurs going round that these funereal trappings come from the family vaults. "The supper itself," whisper those in the know, "is probably composed of equally unappetising ingredients"; discomfort and uneasiness, dismay and alarm. A nerve-destroying crash; an enormous chandelier falls thundering on to the table. The rope had been eaten through by mice, and this unexpected *finale* aroused an equal degree of delight in the breast of the unorthodox host watching from the upper

gallery and of horror in the hearts of his guests. A regular stampede followed, mingled with cries of "Fire! fire!" The entertainment was at an end.

It is not surprising that a man so eccentrically disposed should have approached the subject of marriage in no ordinary way. A suitor for wealth with several strings to his bow would normally allow his personal predilections to have the casting vote. Not so Pückler. He dallied for some time with a mother, her daughter and her adopted child; finally he took the opinion of his friends on the important question: "Which would cause the greatest sensation: to marry the mother, the daughter or the ward?" They voted unanimously for the mother. He proposed next day to Lucie, Countess of Pappenheim, and was promptly accepted. After marrying off her daughter Adelheid and divorcing her present husband, from whom she was separated, Lucie was ready for the fray; but Pückler, who had meanwhile been preparing Muskau for her reception in the highest spirits, and planting trees in his park, fell into a mood of great melancholy as the awful day drew near. He did not fear to lose his precious liberty, he wrote to her, in something of a panic, for he would not surrender *that* without a struggle, but he feared that its exercise might be hampered in many uncomfortable ways. She must never attempt to thwart him in any cherished scheme—at the moment he felt a great urge to travel or to engage in active service against the Turks in the event of a Turko-European war. Thus, shying, restive and

jibbing, he united himself to Lucie on October 9, 1817.

Outwardly the years of married life slipped by gaily enough. Pückler attended the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle and endeared himself to his father-in-law, the Chancellor Hardenberg. He was a striking figure among the brilliant company assembled in this town, and his carriage-and-four was considered the smartest in Aix. He had audiences with the crowned heads of Europe; he attended State functions and was on an intimate footing with many of the great: Prince Metternich, Lord and Lady Castlereagh, the Duke of Wellington, and the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland. "Quelques femmes me cajolent," he wrote mischievously to Lucie; for he spent many happy days in the society of Sophie Gay, her daughters Delphine and Isaure, and her intimate friend, Sophie Gail. Madame Récamier, on the other hand, left him cold; she possessed, he considered, some remnants of beauty, but without expression and without life. When the Congress was over he lived much in Berlin, in close contact with Hardenberg, and was created Prince of Pückler-Muskau in 1822—as a compensation, it was said, for the rights he had sacrificed when Lusatia was incorporated in Prussia in 1815. He was childishly delighted at first, and threw himself with much ardour into the task of designing a new coat of arms which should express his passion for parks, for building, for horses, for fighting, for the fantastical and for colours; he also adopted the motto: "*Amor et virtus.*" Others were less well pleased; he was prominent enough by now to have a number

PÜCKLER'S COAT OF ARMS.



ARMS.

- (1). Or an eagle's plume sable.
- (2). Argent an oak-tree in leaf proper on a sword vert.
- (3). Or an eagle's head coupé sable with tongue displayed.
- (4). Argent a horse cabré azure.
- (5). Gules a unicorn passant or.
- (6). Or an eagle's head coupé sable with tongue displayed.
- (7). Vert a savage man or wreathed vert.
- (8). Or an eagle's plume sable.

On an escutcheon of pretence or an eagle displayed with wings erect sable langued gules.

SUPPORTERS.—Two griffins sable langued gules armed or standing on a serole bearing the

MOTTO—*Amor et Virtus.*

CRESTS.

- (1). A peer's helmet mantled sable and or out of an heraldic coronet three ostrich feathers one azure two sable.
- (2). A peer's helmet mantled gules and or out of an heraldic coronet a tower proper.
- (3). A peer's helmet mantled sable and or out of an heraldic coronet an eagle displayed wings erect sable crowned or langued gules.
- (4). A peer's helmet mantled vert and argent out of an heraldic coronet a wolf courant proper.
- (5). A peer's helmet mantled sable and or out of an heraldic coronet three ostrich feathers one azure two sable.

The whole surrounded by a prince's mantle gules lined ermine and surmounted by a prince's coronet.

of enemies. He had not scrupled to tell a Prince Hohenzollern and the powerful Wittgenstein, when they sniggered at his father-in-law's deafness, that they surpassed the Chancellor only by the length of their ears. Clanwilliam, accredited at the Court of Berlin, was envious of his popularity with women and of his prowess on horseback. The Duke of Cumberland was for ever twitting him on the subject of Lucie, declaring that she was old enough to be his mother (she was nine years his senior), and that he was a poor, henpecked husband who had married a shrew. His Royal Highness went too far one day with a pun on *sage-femme* and *femme sage* and was obliged to pocket the retort: "Le fait est, que j'ai épousé une femme sage et bonne, et tant que nous sommes ici [the Duke and the Prince were the only men present] chacun ne peut se vanter d'en avoir fait autant."¹ It was lucky for Pückler-Muskau that Frederick William III. liked him, for it was necessary to secure the royal sanction for his approaching divorce from Lucie. There were urgent reasons why husband and wife should separate; they were both of one mind on the subject and able to convince the King of the necessity of a step which was generally regarded in the highest circles with disapprobation. The decree was made absolute in 1826, but it did not put an end to the warm affection between Schnucke and her Lou.² Lucie went on

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher des Fürsten von Pückler-Muskau*, ed. Assing, Berlin, 1873-1876, v., pp. 431-432; letter to Lucie; dated from Berlin, December 17, 1823.

² "Schnucke" means "sheep," and might be translated "pet lamb." "Lou" was short for "filou."

living intermittently at Muskau or Branitz during the rest of her life, and the companionship lasted until shortly before her death in 1854.

From October 1826 until February 1829 Pückler was away in England, Ireland and France. He spent much of this time in fashionable London society, where he had already some acquaintances among the great. Lord Darnley, the Duke of York, Lord Lauderdale and Lady Lansdowne were friends of old standing; the Duke of Wellington and the Dowager Lady Londonderry acquaintances dating from the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle. Pückler-Muskau was elected a member of the Travellers' Club and of the United Services Club; he attended all the brilliant functions of the seasons of 1827 and 1828—routs, balls, concerts, *fêtes*, Almacks and dinners. He was presented to George IV. at a levee on December 5, 1826; the first gentleman of Europe said that he remembered him perfectly, but showed some confusion with regard to dates. He dined with Royalty, and was commanded to appear at royal functions; he was presented to the Duchess of Clarence and to the Duchess of Kent, and was a member of an intimate party given by the latter. He dined with the Earl of Carnarvon, and attended the *soirées* of the Lady Patronesses Jersey, Cooper and Keith; he was invited to concerts at Devonshire House, and to dinner with the Duchess of Gloucester and the Duke of Sussex. He was at a *fête* and concert given by Lord Hertford; and was present with a thousand others at a squash at the Duke of Northumberland's, who showed him over his palace a few days later. He figured at many

of the parties given by the newly married Duchess of St Albans and was at a ball of Lady Salisbury's. He lunched with the Duke of Somerset and found favour in the eyes of the Archbishop of York, who entertained him to dinner at the palace. He also met many distinguished and eminent men: Sir Walter Scott; Sir Gore Ouseley, late ambassador in Persia; Sir Alexander Johnston, the Orientalist; Parry, the North Pole explorer; Sir Thomas Lawrence, the painter; Lord Strangford, ambassador in Constantinople, and many others.

He probably preferred the company of that wild Irishwoman Lady Morgan, her sister, Lady Clarke, and the former's two charming nieces. He enjoyed in their society in Dublin a more harum-scarum version of his friendship with the French Sophies. Ragging, acting charades and indiscriminate flirting helped to fleet the time. Lady Morgan for her part considered "Prince Pucklau Muskau" "a most *finished* fop," but there was a general outburst of laughter at his expense amongst her English friends:

"What! is poor Prince Pickle come *here*? Oh, he will have you down in his '*morgen blatt*'—he will *pounce* on you." In short, I saw there was a ridicule about him, or a something, but it shall not deter me from being civil to him.¹

Nor did it deter her from showing him most flattering attentions; but some months later there was some *démelée*, as she called it, about a dinner given by the

¹ *Lady Morgan's Memoirs: Autobiography, Diaries and Correspondence*, London, 1862, ii., p. 263; dated August 21, 1828.

Friends of Civil and Religious Liberty, which seems to have ended their friendship :

. . . first, he was not wanted there ; and next, he desired Morgan to find out, if he went, whether the health of the king his master would be drunk (at a dinner given to celebrate freedom !) ; and next, if he would have the precedence of an Altezza granted to himself. There was a burst of "*noes*" when Morgan read the proposition. Morgan had the indiscretion to advise the Prince *not* to go. He seemed to be struck and mortified. I tremble for the consequences.¹

It was all the more unconscionable of the Friends of Civil and Religious Liberty to exclude Pückler from their dinner-party since he had espoused the cause of Ireland and had ridden on a wild night through dangerous country to seek out Daniel O'Connell at Derrinane Abbey, where he sat at the Liberator's feet, much enjoying "the humble hospitality of his mountain hut amidst these wilds."²

The next entry in Lady Morgan's diary is : "*The Prince is gone, thank God ! ! !*"; for this preposterous creature was convinced that Pückler would challenge her husband to a duel on account of the "*démelé*"—an ill-founded alarm, which caused her nieces the wildest delight. It would be asking too much to hope to accompany a German prince from the cradle to the grave and yet to hear no word of precedence and etiquette. In the nonsensical vapourings of this

¹ Lady Morgan, *op. cit.*, ii., pp. 266-267 ; dated November 20, 1828.

² *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, vii., p. 265 ; letter from Daniel O'Connell to Pückler ; dated from Derrinane Abbey, September 27, 1828. Written in the third person.

blatant Irishwoman Pückler stiffens into rigidity and dwindles in size: behold a manikin in uniform, saluting, strutting, bowing from the waist; with a bristling head, oh, horrors! and an imperial moustache. But although the light of ridicule played round him in the British Isles, his reputation was decidedly more malodorous than absurd, and yet he himself was under the agreeable illusion that his only real enemy in England was Clanwilliam:

He hated me for various reasons, and lately in England on account of the little Sontag. Him excepted I am not conscious to have offended anyone, except some trifling jealousy and that I made a rule to answer english impertinence allways by a dubble dose of the same.¹

The "dubble dose" had proved too strong for "english" throats:

I do not know him [an anonymous friend told Sara Austin], I never saw him, but I hear of him continually in society from persons who knew him well, and I must say the universal impression is that though an agreeable, clever man, he is decidedly not a man to be trusted. That he is indiscreet and has no *delicatesse* about betraying to the world all he sees and hears, you yourself see and admit from his book; but more than this, I am convinced he is universally regarded as a slippery person.²

¹ Unpublished; rough draft of a letter from Pückler to Sara Austin; undated. All these unpublished extracts and letters are by kind permission of the Berlin State Library.

² Unpublished; letter from Sara Austin to Pückler; undated. The book was the famous *Briefe eines Verstorbenen*, translated by Sara Austin under the title *Tour of a German Prince*, in which Pückler described his impressions of England, Ireland and fashionable society.

They call you, even to *me*, a liar, a swindler, an adventurer, a coward, they say you were compelled to quit England on account of the commission of an offence "*inter Christianos non nominendum*" (the black-hearted wretches, the priests must have invented that) in short my dear, *je ne suis pas sur les roses, deinetwegen* . . .

One said, he had met you at a dinner party, and that you were pointed out to him as an impostor. Murray, who lives in the centre of fashion, as you know, told me that he had understood you were an adventurer "*not worth a shilling*" (the English *comble* of criminality) and *faisait des grands yeux* when I told him he could find Muskau on the map if he chose to look. . . .

Poor Sir Alexander Johnston called on me in a fright, because I had told his son Philip that his father was mentioned. He came to ask *if he was abused?* "Certainly not, Sir Alexander—can you imagine it?" "Why, he is rather a Mephistopheles, one can't feel sure"—He did not abuse you however—*au contraire*—I asked him some solution of the 'Travellers' Club mystery: he told me he *knew* of nothing worse than your throwing an inkstand at a waiter's head; but that the *reports* were of some discreditable money transaction; but he added he could never discover any evidence for them. A friend of mine told me that he had been assured you had threatened to publish the letters of a married woman with whom you had an affair here, and had extorted two thousand pounds from the family as the price of their destruction.¹

A lady was here last night who is an intimate friend of Sir John Hobhouse (our present Secy of

¹ Unpublished; letter from Sara Austin to Pückler; dated March 11 (probably 1832).

War). She says the tone about you in society is entirely changed since the appearance of the 2 last vols. ; that they still abuse you, and hate you more than ever, but still with a sort of fear and respect. Lord Leveson Gower (who attempted to translate Faust) has done himself immortal honour by dramatising you for one of the small theatres—the little piece is called the German Prince, and the plot, I am told, consists in this ; that a Jew pedlar passes himself off as a German Prince and thus mystifies and cheats everybody.¹

I have seen two or three men who saw you—One a friend of Lady Morgan's ; he said that you are "a fine-looking fellow" and that what you say of her is true but that it was "villanous" in *you* to say it ; for that she had been really kind to you—She affirms that the abuse of *her* is the thing that sold the book. How characteristic ! Nicht wahr ?²

It was indeed characteristic ; for Lady Morgan's interest in the book was entirely confined to the passages referring to herself. She was outraged at the way she "was properly trotted out in it . . . misrepresented and belied." "The conversations he describes," she protested, with more emphasis than grammar, "was utterly false." Prince Pucklau Muskau indeed ! his real name was clearly the Prince of Darkness.³

Pückler allowed calumny to do its worst once he had received a public apology from the Travellers'

¹ Unpublished ; letter from Sara Austin ; dated April 13 (probably 1832).

² Unpublished ; letter from Sara Austin to Pückler ; dated March 11 (probably 1832).

³ Cf. Lady Morgan, *op. cit.*, ii., pp. 333-336.

Club, for this slander had stung him to the quick; otherwise he was more amused than concerned:

. . . very often I invented in former times horrid storys of myself only to have the pleasure to frighten good silly people out of their senses,¹

he confided to the "dear Translator of the Dead" with a Mephistophelian smile.

On his return to Muskau, Pückler began his career as an author, partly as a means to make money, partly from the desire to make himself felt in his own country, where he would gladly have played a public part. After the outbreak of the July Revolution he attempted to enter the lists to defend his imperilled caste as a champion of aristocratic ideals and the safety of the State. He wrote a monograph in favour of a constitutional monarchy upheld by a strong aristocracy, which he sent to Humboldt and Lottum, both members of the ministry. He approached Ancillon, who was in charge of foreign affairs, and asked to be employed if possible in some suitable diplomatic capacity. Ancillon wrote an urbane reply, but Pückler was not given an opportunity to place his talents and his energy at the service of the Prussian Government. He was right in believing that he had enemies at Court. Wittgenstein, the confidential minister to the King, treated him with arrogant hostility; he probably influenced Frederick William III., who seems to have been ill disposed towards the Prince during this period. More than once Pückler

¹ Unpublished; rough draft of a letter from Pückler to Sara Austin; undated.

failed to receive a summons to Court when he was in Berlin, a neglect which was generally construed as an act of disfavour. His reasonable request to be promoted from colonel to general, a rank which was held by many younger and less distinguished officers, was granted in a manner which resembled a slap in the face. He had been promoted, ran the answer, but had been placed on the retired list. "Am I really," he asked bitterly, "such an entirely useless marionette?"¹

Few men, he felt, as he reviewed the whole situation, had been as badly treated as he. Values, rights and privileges to the tune of £30,000 had been taken from him, and he had been granted a miserable compensation of £6000. He had been given the title of Prince in exchange for his lost rights, but the permission to use the official Highness had been later withdrawn. He ranked below the much younger nobility of Silesia; the Prussian laws had involved him in stupendous losses and in never-ceasing broils with the authorities; and now, as a reward for his personal bravery in 1813 and his recent military services during the cholera epidemic, to be retired from the army at his age; a man must have slime in his veins, or be born a slave, whose gall would not run over at such an affront. He would appear no more at Court, not he; for he refused to wear the preposterous black braid on his epaulettes which was the symbol of his shame; alas, it was like the black line running through his life which he pretended not to see,

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagelücher*, viii., p. 338; letter to General Witzleben; dated from Muskau, June 16, 1833.

but which was there none the less: "C'est égal, je quitterai ce fou pays, pour n'y jamais revenir."¹

The gathering animosity against Pückler-Muskau in high places was undoubtedly due to the often daring satire in his writings and the bitter revelations he had made in *Tutti Frutti* of the ill-treatment of the landowning class by the State. The Prussian ministers of 1833 were in no mood to listen to such home-truths as these. Shaken by the July Revolution; fearful of every overt and covert attack; distrustful of every unusual manifestation; maintaining grimly a desperate policy of rigid discipline and reaction, they watched this incalculable and probably dangerous eccentric with hostile alarm. He had already done untold harm by his indiscreet and all too piquant pen. The mildest of them must refuse to entertain the idea of welcoming so dæmonic an aristocrat in their midst; the more highly they thought of his gifts, the more anxious they must have felt to suppress him by every means in their power. Those who were not so easily dazzled shrugged their shoulders contemptuously, weighed him in the balance of worldly wisdom and found him very light; whilst those whose *parole* was Christianity, morality and order felt tempted to make the sign of the cross at the mention of his name. But being good Protestants they refrained from this gesture and took more drastic steps.

Pückler was preparing for a voyage to America in 1834 when an affair of honour summoned him to the frontier. It was his eighth duel, and seems to have

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, viii., p. 181; letter to Lucie; dated from Muskau, June 1, 1833.

been the last. The first was fought at the University at the age of seventeen, and most of them ended in his favour. With the exception of the Mansfeld *esclandre* they were all conducted with such discretion that no details have remained; but the light of publicity shone on his latest transaction; it was impossible to hush it up. Pückler had told a romantic tale in *Tutti Frutti* of a scapegrace son, the robber-baron Lork, heir to a ruined castle in Silesia. This story, which was a pure invention of the author's, proved to be libellously near the truth. The family affected to take the matter seriously; they also affected to be unaware of the identity of the anonymous writer, which was an open secret by then. They inserted insulting announcements in the Press, insisting on a public apology in print. It was some time before Pückler saw these notices; he acted with spirit when he did. He refused any form of apology, and demanded satisfaction unless the challenge were publicly withdrawn. Outwardly reasonable, and making a fair show of being ready for a reconciliation, he was determined in his heart to kill his antagonist, a Colonel Kursell, for he was outraged by the nature of the affront.

He came to the ground with gay defiance, looking, according to the witnesses, absurdly young for his years. He had driven over from Paris, having parted a few hours earlier with his sole remaining wisdom-tooth, and was wearing a rose which Lucie had sent him. He had only one fear to torment his heart: the terror of seeming afraid. For he was upheld by the belief that in his next existence he was destined to play

some great part, and steadied by the presentiment that the time for this change was not yet. He enjoyed the excitement of the encounter and also the element of romance; the moment when Kursell and he first set eyes on each other might be the moment when one of them was to die. Quixotic as ever, his desire for the Colonel's blood had become considerably less violent since he had learnt that he was no great shot; and when he saw his opponent, a middle-aged, honourable, open-looking man, advancing straight towards him with lowered revolver, he lowered his own and did not raise it until Kursell prepared to take aim. Pückler shot more or less at a venture, but he wounded his adversary in the neck and went unscathed himself; they had fired simultaneously, but the Colonel's bullet went wide. Kursell declared himself satisfied; his wound was, happily, slight; had it been only a fraction of an inch deeper, it would have caused his death. He signed the revocation of the notice on the ground, and the affair was satisfactorily at an end as far as Pückler was concerned.

But Kursell's second returned to Paris fulminating against his principal, and protesting that he should have let himself be hacked into pieces rather than withdraw the challenge. This was not merely the bloodthirsty rant of a fire-eating braggadocio; the outcome of the duel was regarded with similar sensations by those in high places. This seemingly conventional affair was in reality an organised plot hatched out in Berlin by powerful persons whom Pückler had criticised or satirised in his books. A

startling letter from the French Colonel Caron, Pückler's second, puts the matter beyond all doubt.¹ Kursell had been an innocent pawn in a murderous game of intrigue; the victor of the duel had been fortunate indeed to have left the ground alive; for a group of great men in nineteenth-century Berlin had decided in conclave to blacken his reputation beyond recovery, or to put an end to his life. By accepting the challenge he had saved his reputation and fate had saved his life; but Caron's revelations throw into lurid relief the nature of the hatred he had aroused. Pückler's comment on the situation came later. "I could not kill anyone so brave and so honourable," he wrote to Lucie, "but it might have been better for me if I had."²

The outburst of relief and triumph from Lucie, Adelheid and his subjects at Muskau at the happy outcome of the duel is almost as startling in another way. The light would have gone out of many lives if the light in his eyes had been broken then. Laube, who did not know him personally and who had heard a false rumour of his death, wrote in the following terms from the prison where he was atoning for the liberal opinions of his youth:

I have been moved to the bitterest tears by the news of Prince Pückler's death; the fear which befell me first showed me how much I had really loved the man! . . . the last modern knight and

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, viii., pp. 449-450; letter from Colonel Caron to Pückler; dated from Courbevoie, September 21, 1834.

² Unpublished; letter to Lucie; dated from Marseilles, December 26, 1834.

champion against the heroes of gold . . . the sorrow for this great loss overwhelms me daily.¹

Followed by these mingled curses and blessings Pückler left Europe for Africa on January 11, 1835, having missed the right season for the voyage to America. His journey through distant lands lasted for nearly five years. In 1835 he was in North Africa; after an enforced quarantine in Malta he spent the following year in Greece. In 1837 he went down the Nile from Alexandria to Wad Medani; he was in Syria and Asia Minor in 1838 and 1839, arriving in Constantinople in June 1839 and leaving on August 25. He then sailed up the Danube from Sulina to Budapesth, which he reached in January 1840. He did not return to Muskau, which he had left in the summer of 1834, until September 1840, so that his absence from home was of more than six years' duration.

It is a remarkable feature of Pückler's various exploits in North Africa that they were undertaken with the consent of those in authority, and that he was more than once permitted to join the French in punitive expeditions against rebellious tribes. Cold-shouldered and plotted against by his own Government, he met with a different treatment here. His reputation as a writer had preceded him, and many doors were opened to the famous author at which the "chétif Prince Prussien" might have knocked in vain. When he arrived in Athens he was made

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, iii., pp. 268-269; letter from Laube to Varnhagen; quoted by the latter in a letter to Pückler, dated from Berlin, December 9, 1834.

much of by King Otto, and enjoyed undoubted public *prestige* :

"Who is that strikingly strange man with a lorgnette fastened to his cane, wearing a blue frock-coat and light trousers, with a rather crooked aquiline nose and a pale face?"—"That is Prince Pückler," the people reply, "the author of the famous *Letters from a Dead Man*" . . . "We thought so at once," the listeners answered; he looks like that; there is something deathlike in his face; ah yes, genius will out."

"Who is that big man decorated with several orders, with the martial bearing, in general's uniform?" several curious bystanders asked again next day. "That is Prince Pückler," the people said; "who began his military career as a lieutenant in Dresden. . . ." "We thought so at once," the listeners answered; "he looks like that; he has the regular fire-eating air; ah yes, courage will out."

"Who is that tall man in Turkish trousers gathered in at the ankles, with a Polish coat, a large shawl round his neck, and his black hair covered with a red fez?" they were asking on the third day. "That is Prince Pückler," the people said, "who travels all over the world. . . ." "We thought so at once, answered the listeners; "he looks like that; there is a certain something about him; ah yes, an adventurous spirit will out."¹

When Pückler disembarked at Alexandria he had become significant. His literary reputation was doubled and trebled by the accounts of his travels, whilst his personal qualities of daring and eccentricity had

¹ *Königlich privilegierte Berliner Zeitung*, Monday, April 25, 1836; dated from Athens, March 22, 1836.

made him the rage among Europeans and Easterns alike. He was received in Egypt as if he were a royal personage. Besson Bey, Admiral of the Fleet, placed his palace at Pückler's disposal; the Prime Minister, Boghos Bey, overwhelmed him with attentions, and Mehemet Ali awaited him eagerly in Cairo. The first audience fulfilled the high expectations of both these men. Pückler was to cherish to the day of his death something in the nature of hero-worship for the great ruler of Egypt. Mehemet Ali on his side distinguished the German in the most flattering manner; lavished hospitality upon him; bore the costs of the expedition down the Nile, and equipped it; gave him firmans valid throughout his kingdom; entrusted him with a diplomatic mission to further the cause of Egypt in Europe; requested his company during a journey through Upper Egypt; told him intimate and hitherto unrevealed details of his early life; asked for his counsel and listened to his advice. Pückler was unstinting in sincere praise, but independent in his opinions and by no means servile. He did not scruple at times to tell unpalatable truths; he was continually urging Mehemet Ali to fit out an expedition to discover the sources of the Nile; he implored him to take steps to protect the ruins of Egypt against the vandalism of the Europeans and the natives; he did not hide his despair at the barbarous lack of interest displayed by the Pasha on the subject of ancient monuments. It was owing to his influence that the hospital and the medical school at Abu-Zabél were at length removed to Cairo—an intervention made in favour of the doctor, Clot Bey,



MEHEMET ALI.

a Frenchman to whom Pückler was much attached. He was also instrumental in the release from prison of a Greek merchant who had been wrongfully accused. In a word, he used his power with the Viceroy in no unworthy way. It is easier to obtain than to keep the favour of princes. Mehemet Ali was not always as pleased to hear the truth as Pückler was to tell it. An article which the latter wrote for the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, making a jesting reference to the corpulence of Said Bey, Mehemet Ali's younger son, was taken much amiss. Ibrahim Pasha, the eldest son, was envious of Pückler's influence with his father; jealousy and intrigues were active. Before the German left Egypt for Syria the relations between the Pasha and the Prince were cooler, perhaps a little strained, although they parted affectionately and regretfully, and Pückler was still travelling under the special protection of Mehemet Ali. Later, in Asia Minor, he broke with a hospitality which had become irksome and which was giving rise to ill-natured talk. But he never ceased to fight the Viceroy's battles in Europe; he allowed that he had some faults, but he recognised his essential greatness, and grieved over his downfall.

Pückler's almost royal progress won him the title "Sultan of the Giaours" in Syria. When he entered Jerusalem with all the pomp of a worldly ruler, monks, nuns, pilgrims and soldiers streamed out to salute him; Turks, Albanians, Christians and Jews did obeisance as he passed — a reception which made him feel slightly foolish, leading as it did to an obvious contrast. But already his hour of greatest

glory was fading. Mehemet Ali was far distant, and becoming estranged. Ibrahim Pasha received the Prince frigidly at Nedja, his headquarters in the warfare against the Druses, whither Pückler had ridden from Damascus at no small personal risk. It was an excellent opportunity to send a meddlesome stranger to the right-about and to pay off old scores. The foreigner returned to Damascus without having taken part in the war. He was slipping back into unimportance. The death of Sultan Mahmud shortly after his arrival in Constantinople claimed the attention of the populace and the diplomatic world almost exclusively. The Europeans had an ironical lift of the eyebrow at most to bestow on the fantastic appearance of a negligible buffoon :

It is a thousand pities that this German Prince did not remain another day at Calais, and give Brummell a dinner at Dessin's, as he proposed ; for he would have gained some information on the subject of "how a coat really ought to look," which, judging from the one I saw him in ten years after at Constantinople, he stood lamentably in need of—so abundantly was it befrogged and bebraided. He was remarkable, too, in another respect, for he carried an eye-glass on the top of his cane which, being constantly in proximity to his nose, had a most comical effect. But, stranger still, he was that morning, and I understood usually, accompanied by a young Nubian girl, whose face was as black as his own boots, and much better polished, and who frolicked about him like a juvenile spaniel of King Charles's breed. This curious appendage was dressed in man's clothes, and she looked pretty, in

spite of her ebony hue and crimson trowsers. I did not learn her exact history, which must have been a curious one. It was whispered (no doubt the scandal of some white woman) that her lover had rescued her from the jaws of a crocodile on the banks of the Nile! ”¹

After his return to Europe, Pückler more or less settled down, though he still had his freakish moments. His attempts to secure a living for Mr Lucas, an illegitimate and none too intelligent son of his administrator, Grävell, for instance, were hardly on orthodox lines. His nephew, Prince Louis of Schönaich-Carolath, was rumoured to have a vacant living to dispose of, and the uncle applied himself to pull strings. But Louis' hands were tied. Superintendent Homuth of Stargard had indeed received a call to Triebel, he wrote, but only on condition that the Government should nominate his successor; this he would never agree to, therefore Homuth would stay where he was. For future reference he detailed the qualifications for the post. The candidate must have a peaceable disposition and never pester his patron; he must undertake to spare him discussions on religious matters; and—*conditio sine qua non*—he must play a good game of *hombre*. However, as the Stargard living was not available, Lucas' possible qualifications were of mere academic interest to the obliging Louis, and the whole party temporarily at an *impasse*. A more roundabout scheme was then hatched out by Grävell, involving a certain young

¹ Captain W. Jesse, *The Life of George Brummell, Esq., commonly called Beau Brummell*, London, 1893, pp. 285-286.

clergyman called B., a most respectable man and an excellent preacher, declared Grävell, who was to be transferred from his present post by the Government because he had become embroiled with the local land agent, who had shown an unmistakable hankering after Mrs B. If Louis could be prevailed upon to exchange Homuth for B., then Lucas could be insinuated into B.'s cure of souls, and everyone would be suited. Thus far the crafty Grävell. Pückler was enchanted with the idea, and wrote a ribald letter to his nephew to support this *chassez-croisez*. The very man for Louis, he declared, this poor cuckold B. Such a zealous card-player that his charming wife had gone off with the Knave of Hearts whilst he was dallying with the Queen of Spades. Think of the weight which would be lifted from B.'s heart if Louis would but consent to have him; Lucas would slip triumphantly into the cuckold's place; the worshipful Government would have its illustrious will, and dearest Louis a splendid gambling partner and a facile woman into the bargain. Seldom indeed would that young man have such another opportunity of making so many people happy. Therefore he must have mercy on Pückler's cuckold, and might the devil inspire him for the good of the Church; this was the wish of his virtuous uncle. Louis was nothing loth at first; but when he came to inquire into B.'s character he heard all manner of evil, and drew back. Luckily, the Government finally consented to give him a free hand, and he asked Pückler whether he should now appoint Lucas. The uncle sent post-haste for "Saint Luke" and conjured him to learn *hombre*, swore to

Louis that he was an adept at the game, and had the satisfaction of hearing that he was appointed to Stargard. Homuth was now at last in a position to follow his call to Triebel. Two puppets in broadcloth had changed places ; it had been a most entertaining game.

In February 1842 Pückler was provided with another amusement. A life-sized mechanical toy wheeled solemnly up to the gates of Muskau and offered its services to the Prince. This was the famous dispatch runner, Menzen Ernst, of whose feats Pückler had heard in Greece. He had conceived the happy fancy of advertising for him in the third volume of *Südöstlicher Bildersaal*, and this lightning messenger was now his own to dress up, to play with, to have at his beck and call, to send flying between Muskau and Berlin, where he created a gratifying sensation and collected crowds in the streets. Pückler converted Menzen from Judaism to Christianity, nursed him through double pneumonia, and presided at his wedding. Billy Masser, the dwarf, was adopted shortly afterwards and attached to Lucie's service ; he ran Menzen very close in the Prince's favour and outstayed him, for Menzen ran away. Billy was also arrayed in fantastic clothes and shared the functions of Lucie's page with the negro boy, Joladour, who had been brought from Egypt. It is small wonder that the Muskau household made an exotic impression on the Duchess of Dino in 1843 :

J'ai trouvé, au bas du perron, le prince Pückler, entouré de chasseurs, de laquais, d'Arabes, de nègres, de toute une troupe bariolée et fort étrange. . . .

Dans le nombre des habitants singuliers de ce château il y a un petit nain, petit, petit, petit, tout au plus grand comme un enfant de quatre ans, proportionné parfaitement, vêtu en Polonais, âgé de dix-neuf ans, arrangé, bichonné, attifé. Il a l'air heureux, et me fait cependant la plus triste impression.¹

Pückler sold Muskau in 1845 and moved to the family estate at Branitz, where he lived in moderate but comfortable circumstances. He was now firmly established in the popular favour, and could sun himself at will in the patronising smiles of the great. Much in request as a landscape-gardener, he was *persona grata* at many of the European courts. He stayed at Windsor in 1847; and although Frederick William IV. was often capricious, Leopold of the Belgians, Lewis of Bavaria, even his old enemy, Ernest Augustus of Hanover, and Napoleon III. were all extremely gracious and flattering in their attitude. He was in danger of becoming a mere courtier, but he was not really made to dance attendance on crowned heads, and the useful gift of recognising boredom when he felt it saved him from this descent into bathos. He also escaped the part of the conventional democratic nobleman by refusing a seat in the Frankfort parliament in 1848, although he attempted the hopeless task of enlightening Frederick William IV. on the tendency of the new ideas. His own sympathies were divided between liberal opinions and traditional loyalties. He felt no personal animus against those who were knelling an

¹ Duchesse de Dino, *Chronique de 1831 à 1862*, Paris, 1909-1910, iii., p. 291; dated from Muskau, June 20, 1843.

effete aristocracy to the grave, but neither did he join in the general jubilation.

Pückler's instinctive chivalry found more than one vent after his return from the East. Political offenders such as Laube; an advanced free-thinker like David Strauss; leaders of lost causes such as Lichnowski; the slandered and despised like the Countess of Hatzfeld; he was quick to befriend them all. What matter if an impecunious minor poetess was distinctly ungrateful; what matter if a wretched suppliant had satirised and caricatured him in the Press? Those who had fallen on evil times were sure of relief from him. Most pleasant of all to contemplate are his interventions on Heine's behalf. In 1846 he approached the poet's cousin, Carl Heine, in an unsuccessful attempt to soften his heart and unloosen the strings of his purse. In 1854 he took up Heine's cause against the publisher, Campe, who was tormenting the dying man by refusing to send back one of his manuscripts. Finally he obtained from Cotta a public apology for a scurrilous attack on Heine which had appeared in the *Augsburg Allgemeine Zeitung*. Persecuted by his enemies, neglected by his wife, abandoned by many a former friend, involved in unsavoury family intrigues and in bitter literary feuds, Heine was then painfully dying, his mind revolving in a circle of betrayals and revenge. On March 21, 1854, he received a letter from Pückler addressed from Paris, and opening with the words: "My hero and martyr." Such admiration and spiritual understanding meant even more to the poet than than practical aid:

Truly, magnanimous and greatly thinking prince you have rolled away a stone from my breast. . . . Your visit has refreshed me infinitely.¹

Heine wrote this after their first meeting, for they had never met before ; from then onwards the Prince came daily to the rue d'Amsterdam, and a friendship grew up between them, which is not only touching on account of its particular circumstances, but which has also, as Heine had seen in 1846, a more general appeal :

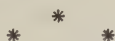
Those who have eyes to see will certainly realise that this is not really a missive of Pückler's to Carl Heine in the interests of Heinrich Heine ; but that here one of the last knights of the old aristocracy of birth is reading a lesson to the upstarts of the new aristocracy of wealth, and is doing it in the cause of insulted genius.²

After Lucie's death, in 1854, Pückler retired almost completely from the world of men ; although he was present at the Weimar September festivities in honour of the hundredth anniversary of his former chief, the Grand Duke. Orders and honours now began to rain down upon him. He was granted the official Highness in 1861, and created an hereditary member of the Upper House in 1863. In 1866, being then eighty-one, he took part in the Austro-Prussian war, but was not present at Königgrätz, to his undying regret. When war was declared between Prussia and France

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagelücher*, v., p. 54 ; letter from Heine to Pückler ; dated from Paris, April 3, 1854.

² *Ibid.*, ix., p. 301 ; quoted by Pückler from a letter from Heine to Lassalle ; dated February 10, 1846.

in 1870 he volunteered immediately, although he had been bedridden for many weary months. The King refused his services on account of his age and infirmities, and Pückler died on February 4, 1871, in his eighty-sixth year, having lived to hear the proclamation of the German Empire and to pay homage in writing to the Emperor. His face, serene in death, preserved its characteristic mischievous expression; the *post-mortem* examination discovered excellently developed organs, in particular a remarkable brain. He was cremated, according to his own wish. A long train of connections and dependents, amongst them Billy the dwarf, was swelled by some captive French officers wearing the Cross of the Legion of Honour. He died without issue, and his sole legatee, Marie of Pachelbl-Gehag, *née* Countess of Seydewitz, a favourite step-niece, survived her uncle by a few months only. Branitz reverted to Count Heinrich Pückler, a cousin of the Prince, whose son, Augustus Pückler, is now in possession of the castle and estate.



It had been a long life, led much in the eye of the world, but not a distinguished public life. Pückler was a born ruler, but his kingdom was too small, and after 1815 too closely dependent on Prussia, for the development of his talent for commanding; and he was too temperamental and too erratic to have made a great statesman, even if he had been given the chance. He was a born soldier, but too undisciplined to care to serve in the army in times of peace. He was a born explorer, but, lacking the protection and

encouragement of his Government, he remained a dilettante in this field.

Pückler was too queer to be great in the world of men. He was a *troubleur* in a marked degree, with a cyclonic effect on his fellows ; clashes of temperament occur with a Pückler which never jeopardise the career of a Robinson or a Brown. His reckless chivalry won him more foes than friends ; and although his charm found its way to many hearts, this was a double-edged gift which repelled quite as often as it attracted. The majority of men watch the bewildering incantations of their more graceful fellows with coldly hostile eyes ; they cannot conquer the feeling that the behaviour of these so different mortals must, in some unspecified way, be gravely deserving of censure.

As a race, we are particularly inclined to distrust charm as incompatible with moral worth. But since this is true of the middle classes rather than of the aristocracy, anti-foreign prejudice must help to account for the English accusations, which should not be taken in too literal a sense. They throw an interesting light on those who invented and circulated such slanders, and also on the effect which Pückler-Muskau produced in England in 1828. It is significant that there are no disinterested accounts of the German prince in the diaries, letters, journals and lives of the time ; for politics and diplomacy were the main interest of those writers who have contributed to the picture of England under George IV. Had Horatio Ross, crack marksman and rider, written down his reminiscences, he would probably have

spared an appreciative page to a fellow-sportsman, as daredevil and as reckless as himself. But the English are not on the whole enamoured of foreign noblemen, and Pückler-Muskau, with his German table-manners and his unreliable temperament, appeared to them merely an ambiguous and undesirable alien.

Ruthlessly truthful and incapable of fear, he was regarded at one time in his own country as a menace to the State. Who were in the right and who were in the wrong in 1834?—those who plotted to be rid of him for good, or those who felt that life would have lost its savour if he were no longer on the earth? Something dangerous in his nature combined with his gallant spirit to give him the prominence of an outlaw among the haunts of Western men.

He left Europe and found, like many another strange personality, a powerful affinity between himself and the East. His star was in the ascendant in the farther hemisphere; he returned a conscious alien to the land of his birth. He was no longer the same man; some virtue had gone out of him. Much more easily measurable by normal standards, he ceased to cause alarm to society; his popularity among the great increased in direct proportion to the dwindling of his stature. But he never felt at home in the world of affairs. He had always known himself to be unfit for it; he now deliberately shunned it, receiving with a disillusioned smile those honours and orders on which in earlier years he had vainly set his heart. He still responded to the clarion call of battle; and when at the last his services were rejected he imagined himself to be in disgrace.

Grimly muttering of intrigues and persecution, the old warrior turned his face to the wall and died.

He had mystified and enraged hundreds of his contemporaries ; but he had once borne himself with such courage at the dentist's, that that worthy had kissed him in the chair.

CHAPTER II

THE ROGUE

BEFORE Hermann Pückler went to the university he had tasted the bitter-sweet excitement of gambling and learned what it was to be in debt. He led the life of a fashionable wastrel in Leipzig and sowed a crop of wild oats in Dresden, which he reaped for many a long year. Women, horses and cards played their conventional part during this period and delivered him into the hands of Jews and Christians alike. His father had cut down his Leipzig allowance by half, but money-lenders surged forward to oblige the heir to Muskau and Branitz, whilst others, not openly of the profession, gathered like vultures in his wake. He was shamelessly swindled by them all. Not only were the rates of interest exorbitant, but he was also saddled with all manner of worthless junk and broken-down nags in part exchange for every bill to which he signed his name. He accumulated a staggering pile of debts and began to pledge his prospects, thus compromising the family estates, which were already heavily mortgaged. His father was horrified when the day of reckoning came, with its chaotic liabilities. Rancorous reproaches and great harshness fell to Hermann's lot, in spite of his remorseful efforts to make amends. The young spendthrift's allowance was reduced to £185 a year. He kept within it

manfully; he dismissed his servant and carriage, and sold all his cherished articles of luxury: his gold watch, his sword, his dressing-case and his tea-service. He was reduced at one time to semi-starvation in an attic in Ulm in bitterly cold weather; unable to afford fuel he would race through the snow-covered fields in the dark to get up his circulation before going to bed; whilst all day and far into the night a nerve-racking noise was heard from a neighbouring card factory. The "Devil's picture-books" were pursuing him still. It can readily be understood that in these circumstances he fastened with some eagerness upon the suggestion made by his father's agent, Wolff, that he might mend the family fortunes by a wealthy alliance. Let the heiress be but rich enough and he would raise no objections, he declared; but her fortune must be beyond reproach before he would sell his freedom. The tradition of his caste, which regarded marriage and convenience as synonymous terms, had a strong supporter in him.

Having trod the path of penurious virtue for many months, Pückler slipped back with rapture in Rome into the feverish round of flirtations, gambling and excitement, but he was at great pains not to incur fresh debts. He was obliged to buy some new clothes; but he walked to his evening parties carrying a lantern and picking his way over the dirty cobblestones. In the end it seemed best to make a clean breast of his financial straits to his friends, slurring over his father's severity, and generously shouldering the blame. After his return to Muskau he enlivened the tedium of life at the castle by occasional visits to

Berlin, during which he pestered the family agent with begging letters, often irritably expressed. His father still kept him woefully short of money, so much so that Hermann began to draw on his imagination, inventing hair-raising tales of debts of honour and threats of exposure in order to scare the devoted old Wolff into raising the wind.

He inherited encumbered estates on his father's death, but it was not until the conclusion of the War of Liberation that he began to think seriously of bettering his fortunes. He chose England as the most likely hunting-ground, but it proved to be slippery soil. Among his unpublished letters are to be found rough drafts in French to Mary Arabella, widow of the second Marquess of Lansdowne, John Henry Petty Fitzmaurice, who had died in 1809; they are accompanied by other letters to her intimate friend and adviser, Lord Lauderdale. Lord Lansdowne had died without issue; but his widow was the mother of several children by a former husband, and must have been considerably older than Pückler, for she had a married daughter. It is clear from his injured missives that she had consented to marry him, that she had changed her mind at least four times, and had finally jilted him abruptly just before the wedding. The conduct of both the contracting parties seems to have been dictated throughout by mutual distrust. There is mention of a legal document containing her promise and the conditions of their marriage, which he procured after much persuasion and deposited with his lawyer. She then repented her "precipitate" action, but did not show her hand openly until she

had succeeded by rather questionable means in obtaining possession of her written promise, whereat she broke off the engagement. He had been hoping to force her into marriage by virtue of this document, and indeed his lawyer urged him to use it as a means to extract money for breach of promise. Pückler vowed that nothing would persuade him to do this, but his tenacity in clinging to the written word has its unpleasant side. After his return to Germany there was some incensed wrangling over a sum of £2400 which had been entrusted to him in the early days to set up their establishment. Part of the money had been spent in furniture, now in her possession; part of it he was evidently to keep as a compensation for the costs of his courtship, which he estimated at £4000, and for the losses which his absence from Muskau had occasioned; but Lord Lauderdale and Lady Lansdowne were clamouring for the restitution of £1200. Hermann declared that he would be unable to repay this sum for at least two years. He would give a legal note-of-hand that would be valid after that period; or, if Mary Arabella preferred, he would yield her his six beautiful horses, which she could either sell or keep. The correspondence ends here; there is nothing to show whether he settled the debt or not. But the hurt and angry tone of his letters makes it fairly certain that he would not feel at ease until it was paid. The horses remained in Muskau. Lady Lansdowne may have refused them from motives of kindness, as she could not have known him for the better part of a year without becoming aware of his passion for these

lovely creatures. His letters to her show that more disinterested feelings had also been disturbed, besides his vexation at having failed to land his fish. He swore that he had loved her sincerely; she seems to have been far from indifferent to him herself:

*Tuesday, March 18th, 1815.*¹

I have sacrificed myself, to what I am told I ought—to my *family*, and *friends*. What becomes of me *now* can be of little consequence to anybody, but I will never deny my attachment to you, and that I had looked to being United to you, and to having found that happiness which I have long been a stranger to. All this can be of no consequence to you, except a sort of satisfaction it gives me, of letting you know, that whatever you may think to the contrary, I am wretched. Ever Ever yours,

M. A. L.

Pückler believed that her married daughter was responsible for this change of front, and Lady Lansdowne's note seems to support this point of view; whilst the following lines from Lord Lauderdale certainly suggest that Pückler's conduct up to the time of his departure from England had at least been considered correct:

Lord Lauderdale in taking leave of Count Puckler begs to assure him that he will ever mention his conduct in the recent unfortunate transactions concerning his marriage with the utmost respect—and L^d L. begs further to express a wish that he may occasionally hear from the Count with whom he will be happy to have a correspondence.

CHARLES ST., *March 12, 1815.*²

¹ Unpublished.

² Unpublished.

When Pückler returned to England, in 1826, Lord Lauderdale made haste to renew the acquaintance, and Lady Lansdowne played the part of an old friend and benevolent adviser. He had clearly done nothing to put himself outside the pale; on the contrary they were probably aware of having treated him rather shabbily. Such false positions are apt to occur when money becomes entangled with love.

These letters contain interesting details of the extent to which the war and the resultant taxes had ravaged the estate of Muskau. Pückler calculated that he had lost at least £6000 owing to his absence at this critical time. He found many farms ruined and a quantity of timber felled and sold for a song. His first attempt to court wealth had cost him £10,000 and a humiliating discomfiture. Lucie's ready response to his matrimonial advances soothed his wounded pride and brought him, in addition, a considerable fortune. Now was the time to place his affairs on a sound financial basis. But Pückler was too sanguine and too full of enthralling schemes to play for safety. He threw himself instead into the more congenial task of beautifying the castle and the estate. During his engagement he planted more than a million trees, a nucleus of the Muskau park which he now began to create. The list of buildings which he was contemplating or executing at this time ran into thirty items. He was also occupied in deflecting various arms from the River Neisse, which watered a portion of his land, and took in hand other costly engineering and draining operations. Overflowing

with ideas, tireless in his efforts, he was spending money like water. Dehn, Lucie's confidential man of affairs, tried to dam the never-ceasing stream of good Prussian gold into the insatiable Muskau soil. But Pückler became restive and masterful : Lucie gave way. His letters to her with their incessant demands for money, and more money, and more money still, make it clear that it would have needed a far greater fortune than Lucie possessed to withstand this endless drain. Intoxicated by his creative mood he would not or could not cry halt. Carpets, hangings, statues, stained-glass windows, silver, porcelain, liveries, furniture from England, crystal from France, figured on his list of vital necessities, as well as innumerable workmen, tons of ray-grass, the very best rose-trees, and the finest hothouse fruits. Various equipages, six horses at least, several grooms, an English coachman and a French *chef* were some of the trifles inseparable from his conception of married life. He must also have deer for the park, parrots for the conservatory, monkeys for amusement and dogs for companionship. He built a hermitage and engaged a hermit, an old soldier of the Guards, with a monstrous nose and a dreadful appearance ; this unfortunate was under contract to wear a monk's hood, a cord round his waist, a long beard, and not to leave the hermitage under any pretext save on Mondays, when he might go into the town to buy food for the week. A shepherd with a bronze crook, dressed in the Watteau style, was to watch the sheep and form an interesting *pendant* to the anchorite.

Pückler calculated that the park alone would cost

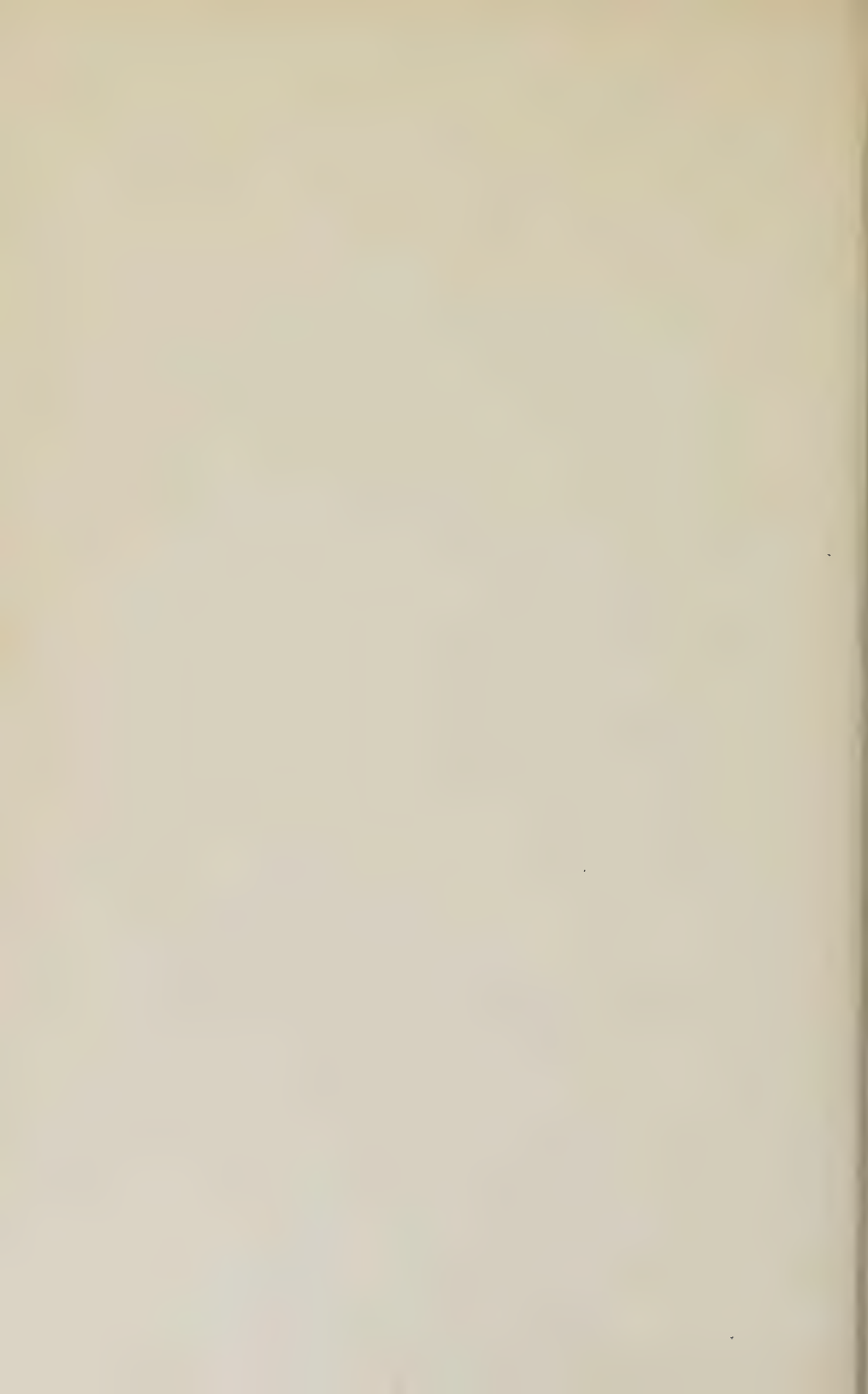
at least £30,000 to complete, but by the time he had arrived at this conclusion he declared despondently that it was not worth as many pennies. A bad season, various disappointments, the increasing difficulty of raising funds combined to thwart and exasperate him.

Lusatia had been incorporated into Prussia in an evil hour for the lord of Muskau. The result was an inextricable confusion with regard to the conditions of tenure of property. Military charges, taxes and loss of revenue ensued. Attempts to secure indemnities led to costly appeals, investigations, commissions and lawsuits. The Count and Countess Pückler were threatened with ruin. Their only hope lay in persuading Lucie's father, the Chancellor Hardenberg, to procure them some redress; a task all the more arduous because he was estranged from his daughter and had shown no sign as yet of acknowledging his new son-in-law. Pückler decided to seek him out at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle and to win him over if he could.

Hardenberg was a liberal statesman who had played a noble part in the anti-Napoleonic movement. He was now drawing near his end and had fallen into evil hands. Always a loose liver, he was beginning to tire of his third wife and former mistress, a woman of low birth and promiscuous habits. She was completely in the power of her physician, Koreff, who was rumoured to be her lover. This brilliant Jewish doctor was endowed with remarkable hypnotic gifts, which he seems to have used without scruple. He was nevertheless a kindly and enlightened man, with



PRINCE HARDENBERG.



humane principles and a winning personality. Half genius, half charlatan, he was certainly not an out-and-out villain, but one of those enigmatic natures whose honesty is at the mercy of their curious temperamental and magnetic powers. He had introduced as lady-in-waiting to the Princess Hardenberg a creature of his own called Hähnel, who had made a considerable stir by her mediumistic gifts, and who was undoubtedly vicious. She was Koreff's mistress, and soon became Hardenberg's also. Meanwhile the physician had obtained an absolute ascendancy over the Chancellor and his wife, and had every reason to suppose that the same held true of Hähnel; but she was playing a lone hand and ousted him in the end. Pückler's first efforts to dodge through this line of harpies in order to establish contact with his father-in-law were unsuccessful. Hardenberg was always engaged when he called, ignored him as much as possible and snubbed him when they met. But before many weeks had gone by Koreff succumbed to Pückler's charm; the two men were mutually attracted and became sworn friends. The doctor once conquered, the whole household soon followed suit. The Princess and her lady-in-waiting did Pückler the honour of morning visits; Hardenberg made him free of his table, treated him like the son of the house, and drank to Lucie every dinner-time. Wise as the serpent, innocent as the dove, he was admitted into that vulpine company, and found something to like in all of them.

Koreff, who dearly loved being a patron, suggested that Pückler should apply for the post of ambassador

at Constantinople, and the latter was on fire at once. He had always longed to go there, he wrote to Lucie, because of the Arab horses, the shawls and the Turkish customs. Hardenberg received the idea with flattering encouragement; but Pückler was not sent to Constantinople, nor to Spain, nor to Paris, nor even to Dresden, although at one time or another he was half promised these various posts. Hardenberg's waning power over the King may have made it impossible to advance his son-in-law, with whom he was now on cajoling, confidential terms. And indeed the old man stood sadly in need of an ally. The Princess had become aware of the *liaison* between her husband and Hähnel, and showed a degree of jealousy at the discovery which her own ambiguous relations with Koreff rendered not a little grotesque. It was probably assumed to cloak her rage at the loss of power over a man whose approaching death made him extremely important as a *légataire* to the adventurers who hemmed him in.

Hardenberg was now completely besotted by Hähnel, who being thus in a position to dispense with Koreff, ruthlessly brought about his disgrace. The Princess strove to assert herself in his absence by violent scenes, which were hastening and embittering her husband's end. He attempted to pacify her by marrying his mistress to a shady fortune-hunter called Kimsky, whom she supported in the approved style on her lover's bounty. The position was an intolerable one for everyone except Frau Kimsky, and even she was by no means loth to better it. To persuade the Princess to an amicable separation,

since a divorce would have occasioned a scandal, seemed the only solution to the unsavoury problem. This delicate task was entrusted to Pückler, in 1821. He was still in the dark as to Frau Kimsky's real character, and believing her to be sincerely attached to Hardenberg he undertook the negotiations. In view of the rapacity of the Princess, and the venomous spite which she felt against Frau Kimsky, it seemed a hopeless undertaking. Yet he succeeded so thoroughly that all the parties concerned were loud in his praise. From Hardenberg and his mistress, who called him her "Pücklerino," to Koreff and the injured Princess, they all hailed him as a disinterested benefactor and the truest of friends.

The consent of the Princess was not lightly obtained. Pückler had to humour a termagant, to pocket abuse and to bear with hysterical scenes. The slightest false step would have estranged Koreff, who was labouring under a strong feeling of ill-treatment and injustice, and whose influence with the Princess was paramount. But the affinity between the two men held good: she finally gave way and retired to Dresden, with Koreff in attendance. The goal was achieved. Hardenberg might now caress the captivating Kimsky to his heart's content, and devote his remaining leisure to affairs of state with an untroubled mind. He decided that something must be done for the author of so much happiness. Pückler became a prince in June 1822.

And yet it seems unlikely that Hardenberg was ever really well disposed to his daughter and son-in-law. The rank and title of Prince proved a doubtful

blessing, benefiting the State rather than the peer; and although he seems to have procured some indemnity for Muskau, it was a favour most grudgingly bestowed. Pückler himself never wholly trusted the wily old diplomat, but he felt a filial and protective fondness for Lucie's father apart from the motives of self-interest which prompted him to cultivate the Chancellor's society. He would often kiss his hand when they were alone, whilst his father-in-law playfully defended himself. One day Hardenberg in his turn raised Pückler's hand to his lips; the younger man allowed him to complete the gesture, then pretended to be quite disconcerted by such a "perfidy"—a better-chosen word than he knew perhaps, for the action resembled the threatening caress of the tiger-cat, the Judas kiss of the betrayer.

Pückler was betrayed by Hardenberg in the end, possibly owing to the baneful influence of Frau Kinsky. The separation had not long been completed before this sinister woman began to reveal herself under her true colours. During a tour through the Harz, Pückler witnessed with increasing disgust her inexcusable conduct towards Hardenberg. She had always been vulgar; now under the sacrosanct plea of nerves she manifested hysterical cruelty and shameless selfishness as well. "Tout cela finira dans la boue,"¹ Pückler wrote to Lucie, in real distress; for the infatuated lover was hugging his infamous chains. He would not allow his son-in-law to accompany him to the Congress of Verona, but he promised

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, v., p. 345; letter dated from Alt-Hardenberg, August 12, 1822.

that Frau Kimsky should also be left behind and that Rust, the well-known doctor, should travel in his *suite*, for his health was now obviously failing. The Chancellor set out virtuously; but he was unable to resist his paramour's imploring letters. She was summoned to his side and appeared in triumph with her husband. She dragged her moribund lover from one town to another, and assigned him the worst rooms in the hotels; he followed her piteously up flight after flight of steep tower steps; visited as many as four theatres in her company on one evening; trailed feebly after her on shopping expeditions, and succumbed to a stroke on November 24, 1822. As death overtook him he turned towards the woman with a terrible and threatening look, and she fainted away; but she recovered in good time to make off with his money and papers. The Kinskys bought a magnificent property in Mecklenburgh on the proceeds of her *liaison* with Hardenberg; but she evidently made her husband's life intolerable, and they separated some years later. She went to Rome, where she enjoyed the protection of a cardinal and the favour of a pope, dying in 1871 in the odour of sanctity.

Si je pouvais croire au diable, et à des personnes possédées par lui, je prendrais à coup sûr Mad. de K. pour une de ces premières [Pückler wrote in 1855] . . . cette femme horrible . . . a . . . sçu prendre plus d'une fois un empire presque surnaturel sur des personnes éminentes, et chaque fois aussi elle a figurée (*sic*) dans leur testament.¹

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, vii., pp. 145-146; letter to Eugénie von Krafft; dated from Aix-la-Chapelle, July 18, 1855.

When Hardenberg's will was opened, Lucie was found to be disinherited, and her father's death ruined all hopes of a lucrative post for Pückler as well. The Chancellor had further promised his help in freeing Muskau from the land taxes and in some unspecified negotiations which would have put £15,000 into the pockets of this improvident couple. They were now in a truly calamitous position. Pückler's efforts to retrieve his fortunes through Hardenberg had been vain; some other means must be found.

The famous fortune-teller, Mademoiselle Lenormand, had warned him in Aix against gambling. He would have done well to heed her advice, but this passion was never completely in his control. He would abstain altogether for long periods, and when he began again, would try to safeguard himself by taking solemn oaths not to overstep a certain limit. But he always ended by breaking these vows, plunging wildly and losing considerable sums. He was no more fortunate with the various lottery tickets which he took on a superstitious system, based on premonitions, private predilections and taboos; for it is impossible to challenge fortune in such ways and not to see all manner of strange coincidences between numbers, names, persons and chance. But here, too, luck was consistently against him, though he wooed never so warily.

A time came when his credit was completely exhausted, and he and Lucie, who had both been recklessly extravagant, were at their wits' end. The "beggar prince" and his wife decided after much

heart-burning that they must go through the form of divorce in order that Pückler might marry again and make their fortune. Neither of them wished to separate; it was merely a "desperate alternative" to ruin. Pückler in particular could hardly bring himself to take so drastic a measure, and he refused outright to contemplate the prospect of a real parting. A divorce, if it must be; a wealthy marriage, if it could be arranged; but life without Lucie, he wailed, was unthinkable. He would awake from oppressive dreams of direst poverty to cudgel his brains for some other way out. Trembling he tore open a black-sealed envelope which seemed to promise a legacy; incurably childish, he announced to Lucie on April the first that they had won a prize of £4500 in the Hamburg lottery; but no such windfalls ever came their way. Money, money, money, and how to get it without marrying it, this was the insoluble problem which vexed and perplexed his mind. He was compelled at last to consent to the divorce, and when it was accomplished he entered haltingly on the search for a new wife. He met with a rebuff; scandal had been busy with his name. Since heiresses were none too plentiful in Berlin, he decided to risk a second venture in England. Money abounded on that island, he knew; and his private affairs were hardly likely to be the common gossip of London society. The last few months in Germany were dreary in the extreme. His horses were sold, he could do nothing to his park; to sit at home and practise economy was hopelessly depressing. Gloomily he set out for England in September 1826.

Hardly had he arrived in London before the following caution appeared in *The Morning Post*:

Sir—As the commencement of the fashionable season now approaches, and families are returning fast to town, may it not be proper to warn the British Fair as to the place being now, as is really the case, swarming with aliens of the description of mere fortune hunters, who have come over for the sole purpose of inveigling women of property, and, together with native adventurers of the like description, expect to reap the finest harvest owing to the difficulties of the times, which may induce females to attempt settling in life where external appearances justify the measure. Some of these men assume titles, and this circumstance dazzles the eyes of the Fair at parties. Mothers of families cannot be too cautious this season in particular.

My information will prove extremely correct, and hoping that it may conduce to prevent the disturbance of the quiet and welfare of many families, and the future misery of romantic and unsuspecting females, I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

VERITAS.

SATURDAY, Oct. 14, 1826.¹

Was this directed expressly against the German prince who had landed in England on October 3, 1826, and was now staying at the Clarendon Hotel in Bond Street? It seems to be charged with some particular meaning; but it does not appear to have attracted Pückler's notice. His "dear old friend" Lady Lansdowne, however, spoke even more emphatically when he confided his matrimonial schemes

¹ *Morning Post*, Wednesday, October 18, 1826.

to her. She told him that he would never succeed on account of his divorce. According to English law, a divorce could not be granted unless the wife had been proved to be unfaithful; his position was therefore irregular, indeed shocking. Pückler could not bring himself to credit such a fact; but he was uneasily aware that marriages of convenience were rare in England and were regarded with disapproval; whereas they were the normal rule for men of his rank in Germany. He also learned to his chagrin that equality in age was considered almost essential among the mad British. A good thing that the *Almanach de Gotha* was not known in England, he reflected; everyone here thought him to be about thirty, so that he might still hope to capture someone relatively young.

The appearance of this elegant dandy caused a distinct flutter at first amongst the "British Fair." Unfortunately he was such a bad dancer that he pretended for some time to be bound by a sentimental vow not to dance at all. He thus missed, as he often lamented to Lucie, the most signal opportunity for making conquests. But he was a conspicuous figure at the balls for all that; and it was not long before a certain Miss Gibbins of Brighton was pursuing him with attentions which filled him with alarm and a sickening sense of shame. What he had against her he hardly knew himself, for she was young, strikingly pretty and extremely rich, and would, he owned, make him a brilliant wife. But she was a doll without a soul, she antagonised him, she was not his style. Then he saw her parents, and the reason for his revulsion became all too clear. Her mother was a

common woman, with a thin veneer of refinement, who was always talking about money. Dr Gibbins was ten times worse: a vulgar, dirty, dogmatic old pedant, whom he had taken for a servant at first sight, incredibly boring and disgustingly stingy. The aristocrat, faced with these specimens of the English middle classes, shuddered and recoiled. "C'est si peu mon genre que toute cette famille."¹ Once married, one might of course shake off her parents, but one could hardly turn them out of doors altogether. The very sight of Miss Gibbins was now enough to make him morose; he never enjoyed a party until she was safely gone; he called on her, as in duty bound, and treated her to the sulks; when he had not seen her for a day or two he felt another and a better man. Finally, on learning that she had stipulated with her former suitors that her parents should make their home with her after her marriage, he threw up the sponge. To live in such society, he vociferated, would be his death. But he knew that she was willing, and in dark hours he would tell himself that if the worst came to the worst she was at least a *pis-aller*, and that the Gibbinses had hearts of gold; that perhaps she might consent to live in England with them after the wedding and meet him occasionally in Paris; that after all even Dr Gibbins was not immortal; and that, although decidedly she

¹ Unpublished letter to Lucie; dated from Brighton, March 1, 1827. All the details of the Gibbins family are taken from the unpublished letters, which, together with volumes six and seven of the *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, have supplied the materials for this sketch. Where no references are given, the quotations come from volume six, with the dates in the text.



PÜCKLER AS A LONDON DANDY.

did not please him, he was not seeking for a mistress, but only for a wife. And yet his ancestor Rüdiger gave him no peace. The "terrible appendage" of the doctor and his spouse was too grim a spectre for a man of his race. It was only at rare intervals of intense discouragement that Pückler toyed squeamishly with the idea of the Gibbins alliance.

It was a relief to turn from this happy family and consider the claims of Miss Windham, a much more suitable partner, but whose wealth, alas! was problematical. She had the sweetest nature, and an intelligence so truly womanly that it bordered closely on stupidity. Lovable, graceful, almost incapable of thinking for herself, she would willingly yield to a higher intellect; indeed with £40,000 she would be preferable to all the heiresses in London. Lucie would soon learn to love her, and could not long be jealous. "C'est la beauté, l'innocence, la douceur, la grâce même, et point d'esprit: quel bonheur!" But next day his heart was no longer in it. His pride, he said, suffered terribly under this wife-hunting; if only Lucie had £30,000 he would marry her again.

He would have done well to have made more haste, for his enemies were beginning to be active:

Letters from Prussia say that Prince Puckler Muskan (*sic*), who was married to the daughter of the late Prince Hardenberg, has divorced her, to marry the widow of King Christopher, a negress of Hayti, who is still young, if we may believe the *German Correspondent*.¹

¹ *Courier*, March 5, 1827.

Pückler told Lucie that this flight of fancy did him more good than harm, as it made him better known ; but the intention was unfriendly and came from Berlin. There was such a negress, it appeared, but she was living in Holland in distressed circumstances. Unable to profit by this warning, Pückler declared on May 31 that the idea of marriage was still intolerable to him and that every woman at whom he glanced with this end in view appeared almost horrible. But, alas ! it was vitally necessary to proceed, and here were four maidens waiting to be asked :

(1) "Die G.," a doctor's daughter ; pretty and accomplished, with at least £50,000.

(2) A merchant's daughter, very pretty, good and stupid, with £40,000.

(3) A well-bred and ugly lady, with £100,000.

(4) A gentle, clever, pretty and well-bred girl, with only £25,000.

If only he could make up his mind to the plunge, none of them would be likely to refuse him.

"Die G." was his bugbear Miss Gibbins, and No. 2 was probably Miss Windham ; No. 4 remains anonymous ; but No. 3 was almost certainly Miss Elphinstone, only daughter of Lady Keith. She was sixteen or seventeen years old, and heiress to great wealth. Pückler always considered her ugly, and disliked her red hair, but at first she attracted him greatly. She was very lively, with roguishly sparkling eyes, a charming little figure, pretty teeth and captivating manners. Later he liked her less, and called her a hideous little red-head ; she seemed far

from docile, he added nervously, and would be unlikely to contribute to the comfort of family life at Muskau. He became in the end thoroughly frightened of her, and she joined the ranks of the *pis-aller*; although she never sank quite so low in his favour as Miss Gibbins.

On June 3 his thoughts were busy with Ellen Turner, who had eloped from a seminary for young ladies with the famous Wakefield and had been married at Gretna Green. The marriage had been annulled; and her father had accepted post-haste the first suitor willing to overlook her scandalous conduct. Had he but heard of this in time, mourned Pückler, what a catch she would have been for him, a fascinating schoolgirl, with a fortune of £400,000. Greatly disgruntled at having lost such a prize, he saw all his "fair ones" on June 20 and found them more insupportable than ever. A bitter medicine, he wrote, which he must swallow sooner or later, and which would cause the most terrible nausea when it came to the point. A month later he was no nearer to being engaged; on the contrary, a succession of social mishaps and gossip had totally embroiled him with London's most fashionable society. His fiery Callenberg nature might be partly to blame, but it was chiefly bad luck; what was worse he had had a "kind of rejection"; things were beginning to look black.

An idyll with Lady Garvagh served to lighten his mood. Lady Rosabel Garvagh, *née* Bonham, a cousin of Canning, married and therefore unattainable, was the most desirable of women, he told Lucie; gentle, amiable, enchanting. Why had he not met this angel

two years earlier? For she had £40,000 in addition to all her other charms. Her sisters would probably have as much; but, pretty though they were, they could not compete with her. Pückler stayed with the Bonhams at Titness Park, Egham, where he continued to philander with Rosabel, and began to pay his addresses to Harriet Bonham, a lively girl of seventeen, "*qui au moins a la beauté du diable*"; she was lovable too, not exactly pretty, but certainly not ugly; much more innocent, artless and natural than any German girl of the same age. When he left Titness Park, on September 2, Lady Garvagh had been told that he was capable of marrying her sister for love of herself, and was committed to help him in his negotiations. On parting he presented all the ladies with forget-me-nots, and Harriet shyly pressed one back into his hand; but Rosabel appeared like a ruler among slaves and attracted his looks magnetically. She had a gentle thoughtfulness which captivated him more than any other female charm. To love and seduce this woman would be an enchanting sin, he sighed; virtuously to marry the sister, a bitter medicine. But he was almost ready to take it if Harriet had £50,000; he would not sell himself for less, he asseverated, although she was a dear little thing, as healthy as a doe, and really in love with him according to Lady G. He could hardly believe it himself, for never had he been less amiable. Worn out with cares and disappointments as he was, even his passion for Rosabel was on the wane.

In this low-spirited mood he wrote to Mrs Bonham

and made an offer for Harriet. Back came a gushing letter, full of sensibility, affection, gratitude and esteem; but the writer was even more eloquent on the subject of her regrets for "Mr Bonham's absolute inability to meet the exigency under which You have been placed."¹ It is evident that the Bonhams would dearly have liked the alliance, but that they were unable to part with £50,000. It was not a very great blow to Pückler. He wrote to Lucie that he had heard with more pleasure than annoyance that Harriet had only £10,000, and that Lady G. had had a mere £8000. No harm was done, he concluded philosophically; it would have been much more difficult to give up Lady G. To Mrs Bonham he expressed himself in a more suitable strain; he even offered to compromise and to take Harriet for less "if Mr Bonham is only able for our sake to *approach* in any way that unfortunate sum . . . without injuring the other members of his family."² He would also propose an arrangement to his mother involving a certain sacrifice on her side, which would facilitate the union financially. He had just had gloomy monetary news from Germany, and wrote to his mother so movingly that this *insouciant* little lady was touched, "presque étonnée de la force avec laquelle vous exprimez vos propres sentiments."³ She made a probably unpractical counter-suggestion and advised

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, vii., p. 61; letter from Mrs Bonham to Pückler; dated from Titness Park, Egham, September 9, 1827.

² *Ibid.*, vii., p. 63; letter from Pückler to Mrs Bonham; not dated.

³ *Ibid.*, vii., p. 65; letter to Pückler from his mother; not dated.

him to marry quickly, using the curious argument that she had been only thirteen when she married his father, and had known him for just a week. In spite of all this good advice the affair petered out; Mr Bonham was unable to approach the "unfortunate sum."

The autumn of 1827 waned; another Harriet became the object of Pückler's schemes. Miss Hamlet was the only child of a jeweller and possessed a fortune of £200,000. Pückler made whole-hearted efforts to secure it. No emotional recoils were admitted, no flirtatious strayings from the path of endeavour; circumspection and determination were the order of the day. He felt so helpless and unskilful that he engaged the services of a matrimonial agent, a resourceful, energetic man, and a model of discretion and efficiency. Through his good offices an introduction to the widowed Mr Hamlet was effected, who declared himself enchanted with the Prince. But hardly had the acquaintance been formed before the jeweller's warmth changed to ice in the most disconcerting fashion. Pückler could only suppose that the widespread notion that he was an adventurer who wished to marry money was responsible for this rebuff. It was too unfair, he felt, and too bad, when he had so hoped to make Lucie happy on his birthday with the announcement of his engagement. However, Mr Hamlet's coolness disappeared as unaccountably as it had come; the "miserable profession of running after a rich wife" began to show its more rosy side, and on November 8, 1827, after a dinner with the jeweller and the *chargé d'affaires*, Pückler dared to hope that he might end gloriously by obtaining an

immense fortune, although Mr Hamlet's talk of costly presents wrung from him and his agent some anguished drops of sweat. On November 11 he was taken by the widower to his country seat and met the lady in question. He returned much impressed. "J'ai là à faire à forte partie,"¹ he told Lucie in awestruck tones. Harriet Hamlet was twenty-six years of age and not unlike Lucie in personal appearance, being also slightly inclined to be stout. She was distinctly handsome, with beautiful teeth and elegant limbs. Highly accomplished, excellently educated and excessively good, she left nothing to be desired, although he would have preferred her young, pretty and unintelligent. Her manners and those of her chaperon were most distinguished; the whole household evidently formed a pleasing contrast to the Gibbins *ménage*. Harriet herself, who had already refused two English lords, was friendly and natural with Pückler. He hardly knew whether she had been encouraging; he thought on the whole that she had not, but he would put his fate to the test in a fortnight's time.

Punctual to the day he dispatched a model letter to Mr Hamlet, in which he set out his rank and financial position, ending with the pious wish :

I pray to the most high, to the giver of all good, that it may be his decree to unite the lovely Harriet and me forever—how unfortunate I would feel myself, if this almighty will was opposed to it!²

¹ Unpublished; letter from Pückler to Lucie; dated from London, November 12, 1827.

² *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, vii., p. 50; letter from Pückler to Mr Hamlet; not dated.

Pückler had obviously been attending divine service in England, and yet the almighty will churlishly proved to be of the opposition. Mr Hamlet, more generous by far, eagerly pleaded the Prince's cause; Harriet herself owned that he had pleased her greatly and that she believed that she could not see him again without danger to her heart. But her principles were incorruptible; they would not permit her to become the second wife of a man divorced in such peculiar circumstances. Lady Lansdowne's prophecy had come true. In great consternation Mr Hamlet came to consult the Prince, who sent him back primed with unanswerable arguments. In vain. She shed floods of tears, but remained obdurate; a divorce which was not based on adultery was a criminal offence to her mind. Mr Hamlet wept on parting with the princely suitor. Pückler bade a fond farewell to the £200,000; then, at the thought of so much good gold slipping through his fingers, he nerved himself for a final effort and wrote a letter to Miss Hamlet, which shall be quoted in full. It would be cruel to withhold from human beings an offering even more meet perhaps for those happy gods whose unquenchable laughter, as we mortals flurry and scurry beneath their feet, makes high Olympus ring:

ALBEMARLESTREET, *the 21. Nov. 1827.*

DEAR MISS HAMLET,—I should never have ventured to address the following lines to You, if I was not forced by unexpected circumstances to speak without reserve and without loosing time where all my future happiness may be at stake.—

May heaven inspire me to convince You, and not

to displease, when I shall try to describe that deep impression which your loveliness has made upon a mind ever since fondly devoted to You. Yes, my dear Miss Hamlet, don't turn away from me—all I beg of You is to hear me with patience, some attention and much indulgence. You certainly, it is true, know but little of me as yet, I may appear to You rather of a romantic turn of mind—but scarcely will You guess the strength of my feelings in this moment!

Still I can do no more as to lay before You my heart and my history as open and true as it lays before God itself, asking in the same time once more Your pardon and indulgence as an imperfect knollage of Your language deprives me of the advantage to write gracefully. There is, I trust, a language of the heart which is intelligible under all events and which will find it's way if it meets a congenial soul.

Beeing obliged to begin from a remoter period, I must repeat what Your father has told You already: that early in life I married a Lady whose years were in no kind of proportion with my own, but as she was of an excellent temper and had proved herself a faithful friend to me in critical times when I needed such a friend—I obeyed without reluctance the wish of my family, as it is very much the custom abroad, though gratitude and friendship alone, and nothing like love of course, led me to the altar. I had nevertheless no cause to repent. Our mutual situation was indeed more that of a mother and son, as of a husband and wife, principally during the latter years of our union—but we lived contented and in the most perfect unison, and sometimes, I won't deny it, I felt even a sort of inward pride and satisfaction to procure all the happiness that

kindness would bestow, to a wife who, though of the most amiable character, being deprived of youth and every exterior charm—would by many other men have been very differently treated. With all that I could certainly not find myself truly happy under a state of things thus rather unnatural, and notwithstanding all my exertions to hide those feelings from my wife, she had herself to fond an affection for me not to observe them and to grieve for it. This discovery—the impossibility at her age to give me a heir, and an other circumstance which I have disclosed to Your father but must here suppress, decided her at last to insist on a divorce, declaring in the same time in a positive manner, that her mind was invariably made up to this purpose, not without the most serious reflection, but that nothing in the world could now shake her resolution. “I have lived, she said, for several years entirely like a mother with You—I love You fondly, but as my son, and my own happiness requires to be no more the only obstacle to Yours.”

I could not very long object to a reasoning which I felt was but to true. Our King, having been more a friend than a master to the Princess father, and having shewn us since his death on many occasions a most particular interest—I stated all to him, and he most readily, under existing circumstances sanctioned our divorce, now about 2 years ago, which immediately was executed with all the minutest attention to the laws of the country.

Your father, dearest Madam, has told me that this divorce has hurt Your feelings—but could this still be possible at a nearer consideration? Allow me before all to observe that the sanction of the King in our country is exactly equivalent to an act of parliament in this realm, and there exists not the

most remote doubt, that after such a lawful divorce as mine, I am fully entitled to marry again any person I may choose, and that the first Lady of the Land would not have any more objection to marry me after my divorce as if I had never been married before. Here in England it is a fact that when a divorce is sanctioned or proclaimed by an act of parliament, whatever the cause, no objections to it can be made by any one. Now in justice tell me, must not the same right be granted to the customs of another country, where the forms only, not the fact is different? Regarding the motifs of my divorce, none, as I detailed to Your father, could be stronger and in the same time more innocent. If abroad a divorce takes place occasioned by faithlessness on the wifes side, some prejudice allways is entertained against the husband, and I think by a very good reason, because no wife indeed beeing beloved and well treated by her husband will, if she had any sense of honour before, leave and betray him. It is, when such a thing occurs, almost allways more or less his own fault—and he scarcely therefore can escape the judgement of beeing either a bad or a weak man—but this was not our case—it was not ambition neither—that, at the example of some great sovereigns, occasioned our divorce—no—the very and only reason of it was but what the laws of God and of men must approve—the removing of a state of things which had become unnatural, nay immoral—a marriage without fulfilling in any way the end and purpose of it. Neither reason nor law could object to this, and though a divorce taking place in Prussia can not judiciously be judged after english fashions, still even in England as well as in any other country the same causes would have brought on the same effect. If after all this any

silly old woman, or any mischievous or perhaps envious young friend should nevertheless shake their heads about it—could the sensible, the high-minded, just and generous Miss Hamlet reject the love of a man devoted to her from the very first moment he beheld her—disregard his happiness as if it was not worth a moments reflection, and sacrifice him in fact without hesitation for the sake of a subtlety, of a prejudice at best, which never can stand a moment's sound investigation? No, my dear Miss Hamlet, this can never be a course followed by You after any serious reflection. You may refuse me for many reasons, alas! the want of Your affection is one sans réplique—but my previous divorce would never be a just one.—

Forgive me this tiresome digression—it was necessary, otherwise I should have found little pleasure to dwell on a subject so delicate to touch, and which but lately has made me suffer so much and so deeply! Let me now proceed in my narrative.

Everything having been satisfactory settled abroad, and finding myself thus once more free—I projected to travel through Europe partly to forget past occurrences, partly in search of an other companion more suited to my years, and still dearer to my heart. After having made some stay in Germany and Holland without meeting any temptation to change my solitary state, I proceeded to England, allways a favourite country of mine, where the fair sex is indeed fairer and, I don't hesitate to say, better than any where else.

It is rather a singular circumstance that in the very first days after my arrival You, Miss Hamlet, were named to me, by an old acquaintance, together with some other young Ladies—as heiresses. Now I must confess, at the risk the fact beeing doubted

in our industrious times, that I myself had a prejudice against, and even some dread of heiresses. I may say that I proved in some way these feelings to exist, once abroad in marrying a Lady with but a very small fortune, and afterwards in England by never courting any heiress further as common civility required. My reasons for so thinking and doing are not without foundation. In the first instance I am a little proud, in the second I don't want any more than I possess though I should not reject it, finding it in my way, and besides all this rich young maidens are not allways very amiable. They are very often full of pretensions, and having seldom known either resistance to their will, nor the slightest adversity, they will often have lost the greatest charm of a woman, that softness of temper and that womanlike gentleness of mind which clings to a husband as ivy winds around the friendly oak. Then they have the misfortune to be generally haunted by the dismal idea "*qu'elles ne sont aimées que pour les beaux yeux de leur cassette*" a foolish feeling which some times makes them unjust and cruel to their lovers as well as to themselves. So much for heiresses in general.—Without paying therefore any attention to all the names, without exception, thus recommended to me—I resolved to seek for myself and to see for that purpose as much of english society as possible, though I am nothing less but partial to this sort of dissipation, preferring domestic pleasures by far to any other ones. Tired to death, but going out of principle to all sorts of partys from the most exclusive sets to some rather vulgar ones—I saw, no doubt, a great deal of handsome, pretty and charming girls with some of whom I was much pleased—some others were still more agreeable, and once or twice I felt even what the French call

“une velléité” to fall in love and to marry, but both times I soon discovered that none of them was yet “the real one” and so I retreated allways en bon ordre, before things took a serious turn.

However this period beeing over I dismissed for some time the whole idea of marrying, beeing rather loath to seek a wife as one seeks an employment, determining to leave for the future every thing to mere chance.

It was during this epoch that, nearly after a year’s interval I heard again of You Madam, but this time in a quite different way as before, Your qualities beeing now praised instead of Your fortune. I was told also, You had refused several very acceptable offers from Noblemen et caetera, which all contributed to excite my curiosity. In the mean time I was made acquainted with Your excellent father, whose gentlemanlike manners and dignified simplicity as well as his good natured and polite behaviour to me gave me the most favourable opinion of him. Thus I was by different means already occupied with You allmost continually, without beeing scarcely able myself to account for it, and longing with real impatience for the moment when I should at last find an opportunity to see and to be introduced to You. Dearest Miss Hamlet—You know the rest.—Beeing prepared as I was by my own imagination, I could not meet You with indifference—and finding You as You are—the dreams of my fancy could not but be converted into reality—in one word: I thought, and I protest it by all that is sacred—I thought when I left You again: that here at last I had found united all and every thing I could wish in a future companion through life. An exterior the most pleasing, a mind and person equally fit for the representation of a court and the delight of a cottage,

and above all, that sensibility, that goodness of heart and that perfect absence of conceitedness which I value more than every other accomplishment. Yes, my dear friend, if You will but one moment allow me to call You so, You made, I repeat it, though a sudden yet the deepest impression on my mind. I delighted to find You so true and natural—having ornamented and cultivated Your mind with many acquirements, without having lost the least part of this precious gift of heaven, the real state of innocence, which even a mother and a matron may conserve till to the grave.

In the course of that happy evening and morning I was permitted to stay with You, I listened with encreasing interest to many sensible things You said so gracefully, but nothing—and You will find this perhaps very strange—nothing spoke more to my heart, as when You told me that three long years You had been suffering and dangerously ill in dreary solitude. A heavenly look, so full of resignation accompanied those words, and though I suffered with You in remembrance of the past—I knew as well by own experience that nothing in this world of trial will refine and purify a sensible mind more than suffering in loneliness—all Your worth was in this moment explained to me, the thought flashed like lightening over my soul and from that instant I felt myself nearer to You, rejoicing in the fond hope to have found a heart which would understand mine own.

It afforded certainly still an encrease to my feelings, that I was not only delighted with Yourself, but that I found likewise every being around You just as I could have wished and asked for it—Your father an excellent and amiable man, Your companion and friend so distinguished, inspiring even involuntary

as much regard as affection, every thing surrounding You pleasing, quiet and agreeable.

And if I turned again to Yourself, I beheld You, besides all your more essential qualities, so quick as lively, so playful as whitty, and nothing really seemed more bewitching to me as when a hearty joyful laugh changed Your thoughtful noble features for a moment to the cheerful appearance of a happy child! and still through every change Your and Your friends conversation and behaviour allways remained distinguished by that perfect breeding and fine tact which indeed is to private life what a clear sky is to a landscape. O! I could continue for hours on the subject—but I won't fatigue You—alas! it is useless to tell You how much You pleased me, the question of importance is: if I was fortunate enough to make in Your heart arise any feelings surpassing indifference? Has any thought affected Your soul corresponding to what I felt—o then don't object to my ardent wishes neither our short acquaintance nor my previous divorce.

Believe me dearest Miss Hamlet, men are very often better known in a few first hours, as afterwards in so many years. I was myself, not only this time, but allways conducted by first impressions, and experience has taught me that I was only then mistaken when I did *not* confide in them. If You can but like me now, and think it possible to love me once—then I am intimately satisfied that I can and shall make You a happy wife, if You trust me, and that You shall never repent of it.—Without ostentation I may say, that I can offer You many advantages. My rank in life which You would share with me is a high one every where, and the very first after the royal family and sovereign princes in my own country. My fortune, though not excessive, is

adequate to my station abroad, and at our family estate, which is a very splendid one, You would find the comfort of an english Nobleman's seat, combined with the pomp of feudal times, where many thousands of Your subjects would give many opportunities of enjoyment to the best and finest feelings of Your heart. I myself should only feel happiness in Yours, You alone would decide of our way of living. I am entirely independant and ready to do whatever You may like best—live in England or abroad, travel or stay at home. If the polished court of Berlin could tempt You, You would be received there with the greatest eagerness and regard, but if You should have any wish to see me an Ambassador at a foreign court, this would likewise be easy to obtain—in fact there is nothing of any reasonable human enjoyment which our mutual advantages united would not bring at our reach. Besides we are not accustomed abroad, as english husbands very prettily are, to subject their wives to a lighter kind of slavery—we like to allow them as much reasonable liberty as possible, satisfied that love, friendship and esteem are but voluntary gifts and that women are grateful to be trusted, and far more obedient to the man who gently leads them as the brutal one who only knows how to command. Yes, my dear Miss Hamlet, so You would find me, and when vanity, art, pleasure and luxury would at last have exhausted their offerings, You would, I dare say, discover still in Your friend one quality, an unbounded richness of feelings for You and an attachement which once gained no human power ever would alter.

Now let me only add a few words more. If this letter, and the sincere and faithful statement it contains, has made upon You any impression in my favour, beware at least to decide with to much

precipitation against me. Grant me one boon, to see You, to speak to You again. This will oblige You to nothing, and I can—I can not bear the idea that I should have seen You once to loose You for ever!

You will find me obedient, never more daring as You just allow me to be, but let me try—if not to please You—at least to be not offensive to Your eyes!

HERMANN P. PÜCKLER-MUSKAU.¹

This epistle, which Pückler considered the best he had ever written, did not “find its way.” Mr Hamlet delivered it in person, taking a long journey to a distant country house to do so, but he was unable to persuade his daughter to open it. No letter in the world, she declared, could alter Pückler’s illegal divorce; she preferred not to lacerate her heart by reading it. He was outraged when his exhaustive treatise was returned. It was too hard, he felt, that his hopes should founder on an insane prejudice when all the real difficulties had been overcome. And the lady had so much rejoiced his heart by saying earlier that she was willing to travel on the Continent, but was firmly determined to live in England. Lucie and he would therefore have remained unmolested in Muskau—a piece of news which he had been keeping as a delicious surprise. God forgive him the sin, he had sometimes almost regretted not having insinuated that his faithful old Schnucke had decorated him with a pair of horns. Had he done so he would now be an engaged man; but such a betrayal was beyond him.

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, vii., pp. 51-60. Corrected from the original.

In January 1828 Pückler was back in Brighton in a desperate state. The rumour current in London, he wrote to Frederick William III., that he had treated Lucie in the cruellest way in order to drive her to divorce him, and was therefore in disgrace with the Prussian Court, needed an open act of favour to counteract it. If the King would make him a General, or bestow on him the Order of the Red Eagle of the First Class, the effect would be electrical, and clear the way for the match which he now had in view with an extremely wealthy lady. On Lucie's advice this letter was not communicated to Frederick William III., and another disappointment awaited him. At dinner with a certain Mrs Clifton, of Brighton, Pückler met a charming girl, with whom he nearly fell in love, and whom he could not banish from his thoughts. She seemed at least equally attracted, for she met his advances more than half way, and he learned with rapture that she had £50,000. But he had the misfortune to fall seriously ill for a whole month, and when he arose from his bed Brighton was empty of society; only the poor and Miss Gibbins remained.

It seemed as if this marriage were meant to be, he wrote to Lucie, in some trepidation, on February 15, 1828. For the last time he looked the situation squarely in the face and asked himself what he should do when the moment arrived to say: "Eat, bird, or die." Miss Gibbins, he recapitulated drearily, was pretty, young and as good as gold; the only child of parents who enjoyed an income, it was said, of £100,000. He had nothing against her personally

except a certain coldness and indifference in her nature and a rather *pincé* manner, all things against which he had an antipathy. On the other hand it was a charming trait in her character that she esteemed her parents so much, and loved them in spite of their social blunders, which often embarrassed her. If at least her father were dead he would propose to her at once; as it was, these two old pills were too difficult to digest, but he would do his best. He got as far as writing a proposal of marriage to Miss Gibbins, coldly worded and lacking the flamboyance of his effusion to Miss Hamlet. He paid a tribute to her excellent heart, "*qui brille du plus bel éclat dans votre conduite filiale*"¹; and owned manfully that he was not indifferent to her fortune. This letter did not reach its destination. On February 24 Pückler told Lucie that he had bidden an eternal farewell to the good Gibbinses, and had departed without proposing, thinking it unlikely that she would have accepted him now, after he had shilly-shallied for so long. But it was obviously not the fear of a rejection which had made him suppress his letter.

On March 8 he was in London again, much depressed and making no progress. The legend of his bad behaviour to Lucie had been exploded by the far more damaging truth, for his intention not to part with her was misconstrued into bigamous designs. It was known that he always spoke of her with the greatest tenderness; it was also known that she was still living on his estates. In fact every detail of his

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, vii., p. 67; draft of a letter from Pückler to Miss Gibbins; not dated.

private affairs was common property ; Clanwilliam must have written about him from Berlin. All hope was nearly at an end ; but meanwhile he spoke everywhere of their relationship as that of mother and son, and explained that Lucie was merely supervising Muskau in his absence. The girl whom he was now courting would prove perfectly amenable, he felt sure ; and indeed any wife of his would love and honour Lucie within a month. But unluckily his financial position was now also public knowledge, and this was the worst of all.

By March 15 the amenable girl had probably been scared away by a highly alarming story. Prince Pückler-Muskau was supposed to have assaulted the virtue of Lady Castlereagh—a rumour founded on nothing more heinous than a rather flirtatious reply to an invitation to dinner, alluding to a previous joke. London society was by the ears : all the fair ladies gave him the cold shoulder ; Lady Gresley stuck her fine nose into the air ; the Countess of St Antonio excluded him from her smiles ; Lord Castlereagh made the most appalling grimaces when chance brought them close together in the valse. Would Princess Esterhazy, his charming compatriot and friend, read the enclosed note to Lady Castlereagh—a copy of the one which had caused the uproar—and contradict the rumour if she could ?

It was incumbent on him to make an April fool of Lucie by announcing that he was married, that he had an income of £200,000 and two children ; but his spirits were low. He saw dear little Harriet Bonham again with the greatest regret. On the

arrival of a portrait of Lucie he kissed it with tears and sighed over it for days; all London knew that it stood on his writing-table. Bülow, the German ambassador, warned him that such sentimentality did him more harm than he knew; but Pückler retorted that only Judas betrayed his Lord for talents of silver. On April 26 he was gathering himself together for two more attempts, and said that his fate would be decided before a month had passed. But the next day he met Henrietta Sontag; and although on May 1, at a ball given by Lady Keith, he pursued his prey, from now onwards what little heart he had had for marriage was entirely lost, drowned fathoms deep by one of those tidal waves of passion which were of relatively rare occurrence in his life.

To justify his lack of marital enthusiasm he met with a repulse on May 11, which convinced him at last that in his circumstances there was little hope of making a rich match. Did Lucie remember the nice Scotch girl with whom he had once ridden in the park? He had paid court to her ever since, and had been so well received that he had felt confident of success. But on broaching the subject tactfully he had been refused outright: calmly, kindly, sympathetically even, but inexorably; and again it was on account of his divorce. The lady had further shown herself so well acquainted with all his private concerns that she had unnerved him. The Duke of Cumberland, it appeared, had made it his business that all London should be in the know. There remained now three not very tempting possibilities: a rich and aristocratic but remarkably ugly girl, who

seemed spiteful and capricious (Miss Elphinstone was evidently still on the market); another of common extraction, but probably good-natured, with £30,000; and a third, the most suitable of the three, who was pretty, good, well bred and unintelligent, but had only a paltry £10,000. A rich relation might double this sum; even so, it remained ridiculously small, and would cost him his lifelong freedom. Would it not be better to marry an angel without money or rank (Henrietta Sontag), if such a one were to be found, or to remain as he was and let fate do its worst?

He conquered this tendency to backslide, however, and gamely cultivated the Countess of Shrewsbury, who was a great matchmaker and favoured foreigners; but he did this only from a grim sense of duty, and solemnly warned Lucie that it was his last effort. On May 26 he abandoned hope and implored her pardon for his failure. Even if he had been more skilful and more attractive, success must have eluded him, he believed; he should have realised it sooner. But never-sleeping hope had always lit yet another will-o'-the-wisp, which he had despairingly chased in the dark to the roaring of storm and thunder.

Never-sleeping hope was still determined to tease. On June 16 Pückler told Lucie that the sweet-natured and accommodating girl of the upper classes with the wretched £10,000 was his for the asking. But could one do such a thing? And would he get the money when it came to the point? Unluckily she was a minor, and her guardians might make difficulties. He further arranged with his former wife that if her presence at Muskau were regarded as an obstacle

she should make a public departure. They would meet elsewhere ; and if the girl were what he thought her they would all three shortly be united.

At this point another unfortunate *contretemps* occurred. Lætitia Wyse, *née* Bonaparte, a niece of Napoleon, with whom Pückler was on friendly terms, attempted to drown herself in the Serpentine because she was crossed in love. She had confided her despair to Pückler a few days before, and had threatened to swallow some opium. The Prince had thrown it out of the window and taken her to a *fête* of the Horticultural Society—a well-meant if somewhat inadequate method of curing a broken heart. But his companionship and a few glasses of champagne seemed to have worked this miracle. Pückler was therefore amazed and horrified when he heard that she had actually laid hands on her life. Worse was to come. Lætitia was rescued, and lived to laugh at her folly. But the Duke of Cumberland had seen them alone in a carriage together at the *fête*, taxed Pückler publicly with being the cause of her sorrow, spread this report through London, and wrote it to Berlin. Disclaimers were vain ; the ready-witted retort that only the English were fateful to the Napoleonic race may have relieved the German's mind, but it was powerless to stifle Rumour of the myriad tongues. Realising that this meant defeat indeed, Pückler made off towards Ireland ; but he was not destined to find in the Emerald Isle what perfidious Albion had denied. He laid some more snares in Germany, whilst Sophie Gay scoured Paris for a suitable heiress ; but their united efforts came to naught. In the summer of

1833 he renounced the struggle for good ; his career as a fortune-hunter was at an end.

* * *

The conduct of a man at odds with material fortune is an acid test of character. Complete resignation to poverty reveals the philosopher or the saint. Re-pinings and a broken spirit mark out the normal ineffectual man ; for the sordid side of existence has a terribly crushing effect. But those whose will to live is a power to be reckoned with, attempt all manner of devious routes if the open road is blocked. Pückler's first reaction to his straitened means was neither philosophical nor saintly. He wrote rather whining letters home during his walking tour through Switzerland and Italy, giving distressful details of the shifts to which he was put in the struggle to make both ends meet, and of the dire effect it was having on his health. These apparently poor-spirited epistles, written with a wary eye on his father, were his first inexperienced essays in the art of being a rogue. He was trying to wheedle more money from the keeper of the purse, a motive which also prompted his tarra-diddles to Wolff from Berlin. He would dissemble if need be, and lie if he must, when it was a question of laying his hands on ready money—an interesting deformation of character, for by nature he was transparent and truthful to a fault. It is even more striking to find him so little hampered by chivalrous scruples in his dealings with Lady Lansdowne. The gentleman adventurer gained a partial victory then over the man of honour. But his offer to part with his “ six beautiful horses ” is like a blast from the keen north

wind scattering the sordid web in which he had become entangled, and showing him, for all his questionable conduct, to be gallant at heart, and true.

It is impossible to go hunting after fortune and to lead a sheltered life. Pückler rubbed shoulders with some shady figures as he climbed into the favour of the Chancellor of Germany. His lot was cast amongst the transgressors, but he was not contaminated by the company he kept. He took the facts as they were presented to him, and did his honest best to straighten out the tangle. He was not quick to impute evil motives; he felt no insidious temptation to judge or to disapprove. No complacent sense of contrast was his as he artfully mingled with the disreputable crowd. The senile dotard, the unscrupulous charlatan, the low-born vixen and the vicious woman of this melodrama appeared to him in a kindlier light as a lovable old reprobate, a brilliant and gifted man of the world, a temperamental woman of the people and a fascinating female. To make Hardenberg happy, and to secure what benefits he could for Muskau, Lucie and himself, were his straightforward and justifiable aims.

In England, on the other hand, he appears as a rogue incarnate, chiefly because he was in a country whose ideas of right and wrong were different from his own. In the best rogue-tales the reader will always sympathise with the villain, however nefarious his schemes. The same inversion of the moral standard is produced by Pückler's letters to Lucie from England, unveiling one dark plot after another to lure some innocent maiden into his toils. His

cunning was always so artless, his tactical skill so engagingly at fault, his hawing and wavering so truly ludicrous, that he has all lovers of comedy on his side. Who could resist his attempts to make his irregular relations with Lucie seem innocuous to the impeccable British by means of the preposterous *cliché* "Mother and Son"? That it happened to express the truth made it the more divinely absurd; for a mother-in-law of Lucie's complexion might well give the stoutest-hearted pause. But the English never believed it. "Mother and Son," wooed Pückler cajolingly; from lips shaped to utter prunes and prisms came the scandalised ejaculation, "Faugh!"

Original, spirited, endearingly comic in his efforts to secure wealth, Pückler was yet for many years of his life a fortune-hunter of the most tenacious and unscrupulous description. It was not because he was unwilling to work. He positively slaved with his pen in order to earn money; and the reckless energy he expended on Muskau is sufficient in itself to clear him of the charge of indolence and fear of honest toil. It was Muskau indeed which was the root of all the trouble. It was burdened with a mortgage of £50,000 when he inherited it, and after 1815 the revenue from the land decreased catastrophically. Had he been content to leave it as he found it he might have lived in moderate comfort; but he was born a "parcomaniac." The conjunction of far-reaching and costly plans with exorbitant demands on life, and an overburdened estate, proved ruinous, and brought him to the verge of ruin more than once. It was mainly to preserve his forests from the axe and to

realise a beautiful dream that he deliberately intrigued for money for nearly twenty years. After his return from England, however, he began to entertain the idea of selling Muskau; it had become a galling fetter, an intolerable burden, and he knew that he would never be able to accomplish a fraction of his schemes. From the moment that Pückler renounced Muskau in spirit, he ceased to hunt for gold. He tore himself free and escaped to the East, defraying his expenses by the royalties from his books of travel, which brought him in about £8000. But it was not until he sold Muskau at last, in 1845, that he knew the comfort of an assured income.

Pückler appeared to Laube and Heine as the last champion of aristocracy stemming the invading hordes of the industrial age. But his incredibly involved financial history shows him under a less romantic aspect. He was captive for thirty-five years behind the bars of a debtors' prison, he whose greatest spiritual need was illimitable freedom. This raging desire saved him from capitulating to the sordid circumstances of the cage. He became instead a beast of prey, desperately turning and twisting in his efforts to escape. But he remained free from the baser emotions of those whose lodestar is gold. He was too great a gambler to hoard it; too recklessly generous and extravagant to become mean. To the last he could never deny others; but he learned sometimes to deny himself. Had he not once meritoriously refused to purchase one hundred and fifty snakes because they were rather dear?

CHAPTER III

THE ROVER

WHEN Pückler senior summoned his truant son to come back from Vienna, and live "quietly and peaceably" at home until his debts were paid, he met with open rebellion. Hermann refused to enter the castle doors. Although he had been sent away from Muskau as a child, and kept away as a boy, the intellectual aridity and emotional bondage of home life rode his thoughts like a nightmare. To return to it meant spiritual death; he was not minded for such suicide. Anything rather than that, he wrote to Wolff, who was acting as a buffer between sire and son; the most rigid economy, the most necessitous life, but liberty at any cost. "A bird would rather starve than be fed in a cage." It was the *leitmotif* of his life. Restive at the least hint of restraint, he escaped whenever the pressure of circumstances came too close. Underlying his passion for adventures and his nostalgia for the unknown was the chafing desire for freedom, for release from the prison of reality: the consciousness that happiness was there, where he was not, as the Russian proverb says. It led him to explore strange lands and stranger temperaments; it lured him on many a time to tempt death; it compelled him to penetrate the secrets of nature and to establish personal relations

with the birds and the beasts. The leopard in the Zoological Gardens at Schönbrunn knew him for a friend and played with him kittenwise, holding him fast with sheathed claws, rolling ecstatically on its back and caressing the hand thrust between its jaws. Even the wicked female elephant, softened by his blandishments, confined herself to stripping him of his gloves. His father, less easily cajoled, was powerless to thwart Hermann's projected scheme of a tour through Switzerland, the south of France and Italy. He put him on a starvation allowance; but Hermann, abandoning his former mode of life, made the journey on foot. With a pack on his back and a stout stick in his hand, consorting with tramps and ragamuffins, and lodging at the humblest inns, he scaled the Alps, forded torrents, saw the world as a vagabond, and escaped the menace of home. Never perhaps did a young nobleman undertake the grand tour of Europe in so beggarly and so blithe a way. Indomitable courage, physical strength, personal beauty and conquering youth made of "Secretary Hermann" a figure to be envied of the gods.

This radiance faded as the dreaded return became inevitable; he put off the evil hour as long as he could, but Muskau and his father were pulling him back. Dolefully, draggingly, he gravitated towards home, where he was to live "au milieu des forêts, dans une espèce de désert, où il n'y a que des loups, des sangliers, des paysans et des sots."¹ He had been away for eight years; studies and military

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, v., p. 442; letter from Pückler to Julie von Gallenberg; dated from Strassburg, February 26, 1810.

discipline had not altered him; but those glorious three years of uninterrupted wandering had made him a nomad for life. Henceforward until his death he was always slipping his chains, disappearing from Muskau or Branitz and reappearing elsewhere in his own dashing person or under some Bohemian disguise in which he could allow his eccentric temperament full scope. It would be a brave task for a conscientious chronicler to tabulate his multitudinous itineraries and to dog him step by step along his erratic way; there is also a tempting field for the *précis*-writer in his letters and published works. But the mind and not the body of this rover is what appeals to me.

His energy, his alert intelligence, his truly insatiable curiosity made of him one of those indefatigable sightseers who cannot pass a museum door. He found time whilst he was hunting heiresses in London to combine a fashionable life with the strenuous duties of a tourist, a diarist and a professional inspector of parks. Yet he had sailed for England, his mind obsessed by the idea of tropical countries, dreaming of the primeval forests of Guayana as the vessel pitched and tossed. There was little to satisfy this elemental side of his nature in England, but much to interest and entertain. He was thrilled by the comfort and luxury of club-life. The affected languor and boredom of the dandies, the lounging attitudes they adopted in the presence of ladies, startled and amused him. He stood for hours at a street corner watching a representation of *Punch*. He must needs poke his nose into Bedlam, where he was greeted by a poor madwoman with the ejaculation:

“ You are a foreigner. I know you, Prince ! ” After sitting alertly through debates in the Commons and the Lords he rode out to Epsom to bet on the races, and marvelled afresh at the unequalled skill of English jockeys. He was hardly less struck by the prevalence of cheating at every kind of sport, and at cards as well, in all ranks of society, and notably amongst the aristocracy. He admired the excellent production of Shakespeare’s plays and assiduously frequented the picture galleries. He was rewarded by the sight of a *Venus* of Titian, whose immaculate body, whose pale and languishing face formed the most beautiful object his eyes had yet beheld. The glorious pageantry of sunsets reconciled him to the miseries he was enduring at Brighton, where he indulged a romantic passion for riding by the waves of the moonlit sea. He procured some contraband fireworks here for a spoilt little beauty whose mother had expressly forbidden them. He also spent some delightful hours with the venerable chieftain of a Highland clan, listening to gory tales of the days of yore and to boastful reminiscences of the sensation the laird’s kilt had created in Berlin. The soulful, fiery eyes of the giraffe in Windsor Park found their way to his heart ; whilst he enlivened the dullness of London out of the season by a fascinating *liaison* with a mouse. She was certainly a lady bewitched, and full of grace ; timid at first, but growing tamer day by day and with eyes like twinkling stars. He could not get accustomed to musical evenings in England—the hardest trial, he declared, which the foreigner had to face. To hear these soulless young misses squawk-

ing or thumping the piano, whilst their mothers smiled fatuously, was purgatory to him. One evening Mrs Bonham obliged the company at Titness Park with an interminable song, whose refrain, "Je t'aimerai toujours," had a trill on the "ai" which brought on such an attack of giggles that Pückler rushed suffocating from the room. The tenants' supper at Cobham Hall, on the other hand, was a thoroughly enjoyable function. He met his old coachman, Child, here, who saluted him with the wish "to have always plenty of gold, and never to become old."

There were good reasons why Pückler never felt quite at home in English society, although he considered it the great world *par excellence* of Europe. Much though he admired our political institutions, he could not conquer his instinctive dislike for the arrogance and stiffness of the nobility. He was one of the first to adopt the now conventional Continental attitude towards Byron. England's greatest poet since Shakespeare had been condemned, he declaimed, by a pack of philistines and hypocrites who were not worthy to unloosen the latches of his shoes. He was also extremely touchy on the subject of Napoleon, for whom he felt a hero-worship, shared by Heine, and which was to become the fashion. He could not contemplate calmly the treachery of the English in banishing the Emperor to St Helena. These themes had the value of freshness in 1827.

His enthusiasm for those works of nature and art which have grown throughout the centuries round the castles of the great was unquestioning. He visited

one park after another in a maze of delight, recognising masterpieces of architecture and landscape gardening with the selfless satisfaction of an artist, which crystallised at the sight of Warwick Castle into ecstasy and awe. He also stood entranced before the *Judith* at Blandford Park and the seductive portrait of *Mary Queen of Scots* at Blenheim. Thus in the intervals of the sordid pursuit of money he drank in beauty through the eye. It was sightseeing at its loftiest; but it was not until his position became untenable in English society that he took to the open road as a means of escape. He emptied a bottle of champagne to Lucie on the summit of Mount Snowdon and broke with his immediate past. Two majestic eagles circled above him as he mounted Capel Cerrig, kinsmen to his own heraldic bird, bidding him take heart. After a dangerous scramble to the top of Merlin's enchanted rock, Dinas Emris, he saw a great black lizard, who blinked at him so mockingly that there was no mistaking the malicious sorcerer himself. He had been plagued by many a fantastic dream in England; in Ireland he was rescued from a nightmare by his ancestor, Rüdiger of Bechlarn. For here he was amongst a people and amidst scenery which facilitated his fierce flight from care. Surrounded by wild Irishwomen such as Lady Morgan, or colloquing with the peasants and the priests, or stag-hunting over rough country with Lord Howth, or pledging the lad-ohs in wine, Pückler was able to forget his humiliations in England and escape from reality into romance. He christened an island on Lake Killarney in Lucie's name; he con-

jured up the devil among the rocks and mountains of Glengarriff in the midst of a dæmonic storm ; and a beautiful peasant girl came limping barefoot towards him with the red hood of Kerry on her curls. 'The wild scenery, the primitive customs, the legends and fairy-tales of the people set him longing once more for tropical lands, brought back to his mind tales of Lady Hester Stanhope, and moulded his future dreams.

Returning to Dublin, Pückler made friends with a small circus-rider of seven, a naughty but attractive little minx ; and in Calais he pacified a cross little English girl, who had to be dragged away by her nurse, whilst he stood on the shore following the graceful evolutions of a seagull. Then he went to pay his respects to Brummell, a modern dandy saluting an ancient beau. He travelled home through Paris, Mayence, Dresden and Leipzig in a burst of wild spirits, behaving in an outrageous fashion and painting Saxony red. With shameless grace he confessed to Lucie that he was still a great libertine, a great fool and a great child ; he must indeed have been incorrigible, for had he not been present at the impressive ceremony of English family prayers ? But he had won new memories and added to his adventures ; and if he brought no " daughter " home to Lucie, the little spaniel called Francis was perhaps a more acceptable gift.

The five years spent subsequently in his own country were not of the kind to induce Pückler to settle down. Germany was dreary, money was short, Muskau was irritating, life seemed a cage. When

circumstances were at their blackest he fled away from Muskau and left them behind. He bade a fond farewell to Lucie, flung himself into his carriage with a sigh of relief and was gone. He went in style, surrounded by a soothing *mise-en-scène*. A smart black *coupé* tastefully picked out in yellow, large crystal windows, an interior upholstered in sky-blue, with gold braid and tassels, a green parrot in a cage, a little dog on the floor, a handsome young footman behind, and Pückler himself on the box, leaning back negligently and surveying the landscape through a lorgnette. A red Turkish fez with a blue tassel sat rakishly on his head; a cashmere shawl was gracefully knotted at the neck; and a black military frock-coat, nankeen trousers and elegant highly polished boots set off his figure to perfection. He was faultlessly turned out and word-perfect, a famous and eccentric tourist, and he snapped his fingers at care. All the way from Muskau to Carlsbad he played this absorbing game; thus in the summer of 1834 he set out to see some more of the world.

For over two years he had felt an unremitting pull towards distant lands; first Russia, then Africa and Asia had been tempting him away. Another continent now swam into his ken; he was told in Bamberg that America would receive him with as much enthusiasm as if he were Lafayette. It seemed wasteful not to taste such an experience; to America, therefore, he would go. Fate immediately decided that he should not, and circumstances grouped themselves together into a series of impediments between Pückler and the New World, keeping him in Europe until the right

season for this visit was passed. His valet fell ill at Bamberg. The master did not like to leave him to the tender mercies of the innkeeper, and waited for his recovery from day to day. Finally, realising that this young native of Muskau was suffering from acute homesickness, he sent him back and decided to be his own servant for a time. His departure was still further delayed by the disappearance of the manuscript of the last three volumes of *Tutti Frutti*, which went astray in the post. He wished to revise it before he left Germany, but was finally obliged to leave the proof-correcting to Varnhagen and to proceed to Paris to meet Colonel Kursell.

The Land of Freedom was offered up on the altar of honour ; it was too late to think of America by the time the duel was fought. Pückler at first bewailed the lost opportunity, seeing himself as the victim of a begrudging fate which condemned him to perpetual mediocrity and denied him greatness even as a traveller. But the idea of turning southwards instead of westwards raised his mercurial spirits. Lucie, who had been thanking her stars that America was to remain undiscovered by her Lou, was thrown into a state of piteous alarm when he communicated his new plans. In vain did she implore him to be sensible at last and to come to years of discretion—to confine the fantastic adventurer by the fetters of reality ; in vain did she lament that his restlessness was torturing her to death ; that she could not bear the thought of the perils he was always seeking and of the dangers he would not avoid. To all her petitions to come home

and stay there he answered with an insight which she did not share :

You are the hen, and I am the duck ; no god can alter that now ; neither of us will ever be converted ; therefore be kind, my darling ; forgive my nature which is stronger than myself, and let me swim.¹

He left Paris on October 4, 1834, and made for the Pyrenees, where he found sanctuary from the oppressions and irritations which had been pursuing him during the past years. Among those lovely mountains, " the fortresses which we travellers conquer," he felt himself intoxicatingly alive. He played some mystifying tricks on the simple natives and lost his heart to the Arab horses in the stud near Pau, tearing himself away from the pearl, the white charger, Haléby, with the feeling that he had seen a god. He determined to buy an estate in the Pyrenees, to establish himself in this glorious scenery and to live life as it should be lived. But not now and not yet. The spirit of adventure and the lure of wild places were fermenting in his blood. A six weeks' halt at Tarbes, spent in writing night after night at his latest book, *Semilasso*, which was to provide him with money for more spacious wanderings ; a short visit to Marseilles, then on to Toulon, whence he embarked for Africa on the *Crocodile* on January 11, 1835.

He was mournfully inclined as he stepped on board, for he had been met with a budget of bad news in Marseilles. His sister Bianca and Lucie's little dog Francis had died whilst he had been walking and

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, viii., p. 288 ; letter from Pückler to Lucie ; dated from Paris, September 29, 1834.

climbing in the Pyrenees; also a woman called Louise von Kottwitz, with whom he had once fancied himself in love. He was sorry about Louise and thought tenderly of Bianca; but he was almost a stranger in his own family and had seen his sister rarely in late years. It was the loss of his engaging little playfellow Francis which he took most to heart and which caused him to shed tears of regret. It was a sad send-off from Europe; but his familiar spirit urged him to be gone, and he obeyed that call which only then spells disaster when the ears attuned to it will not heed. He had his reward on landing in Algiers:

It is divine here! [he babbled excitedly] A paradise; everything new, strange, primitive; *des mœurs épouvantables autant qu'on veut*; beautiful men and women, free and easy manners, a climate already like the most beautiful summer; aloes, cactus and yellow jasmine growing like weeds, the eternal snow mountains of the Atlas in the background—*je me retrouve de nouveau jeune ici*.¹

He was so radiantly happy, uplifted by the buoyant feeling of freedom and surrounded by the aura of Africa, that he became a favourite immediately in Algiers, and plunged into a gay social life, welcomed and befriended on all sides. Pottering round the streets, purchasing curios at the bazaars, wallowing in Moorish baths or exploring the native night-life, he was almost incessantly occupied in his innermost thoughts with the deeds of daring of his special

¹ Letter to Lucie; dated from Algiers, January 15, 1835; quoted by Ludmilla Assing in her *Life* of Pückler.

affinity, Yussuf Bey, a Turkish commander of the Spahis, "le plus fameux sabreur de l'armée d'Alger."¹ The courage, the dash and the chivalry of this brilliant young officer, his almost incredible adventures, his romantic love affair with the daughter of the Bey of Tunis, his cruelty and sentimentality made him irresistibly amiable in the eyes of a man who, if slightly less primitive and with a less melodramatic past, was fully as capable of "loving like a nightingale and fighting like a lion."² The sympathy between these two amorous dare-devils made them inseparable whilst Pückler was in Algiers. Yussuf confided the story of his life to the Prince, and a hair-raising tale it was. Ushered in by passion and cruelty, betrayal and revenge, it continued with the murder and mutilation of the traitor, whose body, immured in a wall in Yussuf's room, was sensationally discovered after the lapse of a year. It ran through an ascending scale of imprisonment, death-sentence by poison and a hairbreadth escape. It portrayed a charnel-house, a thwarted elopement, assassinations without number and rivers of blood. It ended with a last tragic parting between Yussuf and the daughter of the long-suffering Bey. To hear it told by the hero and to watch the fierce light in his eyes was worth all the *Arabian Nights* put together; Pückler leaned and listened avidly. Then, with the blood still hammering in his veins, he set out after adventures of his own.

¹ Unpublished letter to Lucie from Puckler; dated from Algiers, January 15, 1835.

² *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, i., p. 76; letter from Pückler to Sophie Gay; dated from Algiers, February 23, 1835.



PÜCKLER AND YUSSUF BEY.

His first expedition inland was the ascent of the Hammal mountain. The French in Algiers declared that he must have at least two thousand troops as an escort, failing which the Beduins would certainly slit his throat—Pückler went off with a one-eyed Arab chief, a Belgian officer and an interpreter, and returned unscathed. This undoubtedly foolhardy undertaking was the talk of Algiers for some time; for the German had been sighted from afar by hostile Arabs, who had scoured the district for him, but without success. He accompanied General Raphael on a military expedition to Buffarik, and took part in another punitive campaign from Bone with General Vicomte d'Uzer, for the Arabs were everywhere in a state of insurrection. He hunted the wild boar, and visited the ruins of Carthage from Tunis. All this merely whetted his appetite for more. He obtained a special firman from the Bey of Tunis to enter the holy city of Kairwan, and set out on a hazardous journey through the desert on horseback, in a snow-white burnous with a sky-blue fringe. The Arab chief who had been detailed to escort him attempted to balk his ascent of the Sauwan mountain on the way to Kairwan by every means in his power; for two great Mussulman saints lay buried on the summit, and he was determined that their tomb should not be desecrated by the presence of this Christian dog. Pückler was led to the top of a smaller peak, discovered the deception at a glance and descended in righteous wrath, resolved not to be thwarted a second time. In spite of the chief's persistingly misleading information he scaled the Sauwan a few days later,

and proceeded on his way to Kairwan, which he was the fourth European to enter ; and the first, according to the governor, to be permitted to stay so long and to see the city in such detail.

He was by now completely at home with the Arabs and was never tired of watching them and learning their ways. Riding with them by day, sharing their meals, sleeping in their tents, savouring their coffee and smoking their pipes, it was almost as if he had sloughed his skin and become a Beduin himself. But he was more courageous than they were and had learned to discount their tales of difficulties and dangers. He was also much more masterful and knew how to manage men. The inhabitants of El Djemm, who had suffered at the hands of a Christian missionary, received him surlily one nightfall, and he decided to ride away. Something in the quality of his anger impressed them ; they changed their tone abruptly, brought him food in great quantities and implored him to remain. He refused curtly, and sought night-quarters elsewhere, only to find the lieutenant of the chief of El Djemm waiting for him at the next halt to offer him his Arab horse. Pückler would not accept the gift, but intimated that he forgave the offenders. Next morning the suppliant was still there, full of attentions and still anxious to give him his silver-grey steed. It was with difficulty that Pückler stuck to his refusal ; he was almost glad when the temptation was removed and the Arab departed gleefully in a cloud of dust. This inexperienced European also dealt energetically with a case of theft, not only retrieving the stolen articles but also inspiring in the breast of

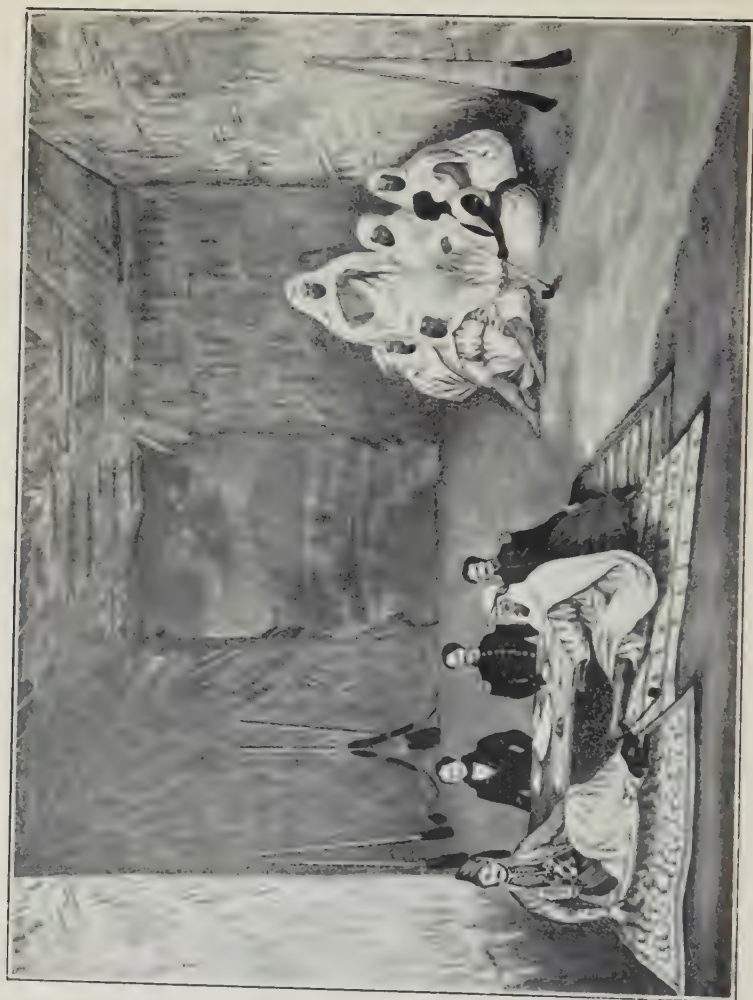
the guilty chief of the village a wholesome feeling of awe. He made himself loved as well as feared, for he liked these fine but undisciplined people himself. Muhammed di Sboy, the chief of Sendessem, won his heart by his grave courtesy, his beauty of manners and person; and his lovely little son, Bubaker, bewitched Pückler by slipping confidently into his tent, and gravely examining his things. He opened and unpacked all the cases and boxes, but put everything neatly and accurately back. He was rewarded with some attractive trifles and took a noiseless departure, leaving the German enraptured.

Having penetrated to Susa and Sfax, Pückler made a special point of exploring the ancient Roman remains on the return journey. He came across several ruins which were not marked on the maps, and began to play the fascinating game of locating ancient cities by the light of his own intelligence, aided by Sallust and Shaw. He made no sensational discoveries, but he threw out some interesting and sensible suggestions. A mere *amateur*, with no professional equipment, he was in a position to dispute with becoming modesty some of Sir Grenville Temple's hypotheses when he read the latter's book on his return to Tunis.

The stifling atmosphere of town life appalled Pückler, fresh from the space and silence of the desert. Tunis, which had superseded Algiers in his affections as a "really new world," appeared after his two months' absence as a sordid, suffocating inferno. He fell ill with rheumatic fever and became a prey to delirious dreams. But stronger by far than

his physical discomfort was his spiritual nostalgia for waste places and the illimitable tent of the stars. The social life of Tunis⁷ seemed so stale and wearisome that he escaped to Kurbo in search of solitude and health. He left Africa in October 1835, bearing with him, as a gift from the Bey of Tunis, four oxen, twenty sheep, one hundred hens, six skins of oil, four casks of butter, five hundred eggs, one hundredweight of coffee, two hundredweight of rice, two wagon-loads of vegetables, two great baskets of grapes, four hundred melons and six cases of preserves.

As he tossed and turned feverishly during his illness in Tunis there was occupation and to spare for his mind. Yussuf's stories were still running in his head, and tales of the Foreign Legion told by his secretary, Jäger; incidents too from the lives of the galley-slaves. But stay, he had surely heard those in Europe? Ah, yes, in Toulon, before the voyage. What a storm on the way out!—his usual luck at sea, but nothing to the gale he had witnessed in Algiers, which had wrecked all the ships in the harbour. "The waves climbing up the rocks, roaring white ghosts, conjured up like phantoms from the deep." Then more storms as he sailed along the coast, and the ship—the ship of the desert—camels. Useful but ugly and disgusting beasts, with their hard greenish chewing mouths. Ah, no, horses for him, swift Arab steeds, the most beautiful of creatures. Was it an ass that had thrown him near that wonderful sky-blue lily six inches in diameter? Nothing more touching than the cry of wild asses, "a whole scale of delicate shades, an expression of melancholy, deep feeling and an almost religious



A BIVOUCAC IN THE DESERT.

resignation to their hard burden-bearing lot." Talking of burdens, would he ever forget the gallant little beetle struggling along under a ball of horse-dung six times its own size? 'There's no fighting with fate; for though he had come to its rescue when it fell into a hole, and placed it with its prize in the shade of a neighbouring bush, another much larger beetle had appeared upon the scene, and after an Homeric contest possessed the field. This time he had forborne to meddle; pondering, he had mounted his horse and ridden upon his way. Towards Kairwan, wasn't it? What an amusing description Mustapha, his servant, had given him of the interior of the mosque; for of course he, being a Christian, had not been allowed in. Mustapha and his Hamba dodging in terror through those magic pillars, which were supposed to squeeze the life out of anyone who had offended Mohammed. Superstitious—well, what about himself and Fridays? He couldn't quite conquer that; after all, he had been nearly drowned that Friday fording the Hamyse; and on another of those unlucky days he had lost the beautiful Dolland which he'd had for twenty years. A dead shot; but he hated killing animals. By the way, it had been good sport showing off with his pocket pistols to those Beduins near Hydrah. One of the pistols had missed fire and all the Arabs had laughed; but he had taken the other, aimed from his bed at a bottle which Jäger had held on a stick twenty yards away, and, by Jove, he had hit it, and the Arabs had ceased to laugh. He wouldn't have missed that triumph for a thousand piastres. Strange primitive creatures the Beduins. How terrified that five-year-old had been when he had

fixed her with his lorgnette ; a regular little devil she was too, climbing like a squirrel on to the top of the highest tent, or careering wildly on horseback. There was something very attractive about children ; like little animals they were. Would Lucie care for that adorable lion cub the Bey of Tunis had offered him as a gift ? He had seen no wild lion as yet ; but he had two gazelles in his menagerie already, a white vulture and Diana, the bitch who had joined him of her own accord in Sfax. But, oh, *why* hadn't he picked up that little chameleon who had walked so pathetically between the horses' hoofs ? it had stopped several times to rest and had looked round in surprise, and it was so droll and so graceful in its helplessness. One of the Hambi had wanted to catch it, but he had feared that it might get hurt ; it was only later that he realised how easily he could have transported it the short distance to Tunis. Oh, why hadn't he picked up the comical little creature and made a faithful companion of it ? Faithfulness, changeableness, chameleons and women—so his mind slipped back at last into more accustomed grooves.

After another severe tossing Pückler landed at Malta at the end of October 1835 and stayed until the end of December, undergoing a period in quarantine for the cholera and the plague, which he spent in reading and writing ; he also engaged in long theological arguments with an original missionary called Wolff. On being released from quarantine he took part in the social life of the island, where he was made much of by the English. He was entertained on the man-of-war the *Edinburgh* : he dined at the officers'

mess, attended manœuvres, and was conducted over the barracks and the military hospital. He was present at a trial for murder, played whist with the English ladies, and generally amused himself in his character of a man of the world. He had intended visiting Egypt from Malta, but Lady Lyons persuaded him to follow her to Greece and to witness the royal functions in Athens on the occasion of the presence of the King of Bavaria. Pückler was nothing loth. Egypt could wait, he decided; his journey could be prolonged. If necessary he could make a flying visit to Germany from Greece, for he was often overcome with longing to see Lucie. Meanwhile, having exhausted the possibilities of Malta, he would see the island of Gozo and then set off for Hellas. The traveller's plans were nearly frustrated, and his life within an ace of being lost, by his own recklessness. Unable to find decent quarters in Morfu, opposite the island of Gozo, he insisted on crossing at nightfall in an open boat during the most terrible storm; and it was little short of a miracle that the landing was made at all. The fishermen who owned the boat lost their heads and began to scream and quarrel; a monk of the Gozo monastery lay flat in the bottom of the boat, babbling prayers in Latin and Maltese; Selim, the servant, called aloud to Mohammed; Pückler remembered too late that he had seen the corpse of a condemned murderer swaying on the gallows that morning—an evil omen—but he had with him a medal of Cæsar, which he had found among the ruins in Africa, and he put his trust in this talisman. By the aid of ropes thrown out to them from the shore the whole party

landed safely after a bad quarter of an hour, wet to the skin, chattering with cold, but otherwise none the worse for the adventure and thankful to find themselves alive. A little whimpering spaniel had been flung ashore first of all by its master.

It was all the more headstrong of Pückler to rush on to what seemed certain destruction for the sake of a comfortable bed and good food, because he felt a superstitious terror of the sea, and could not justify himself by his favourite maxim that danger is non-existent where fear is absent. Crossing from Malta to Patras in one of the most awful storms he had yet encountered, he remembered a prophecy made when he was a child, that in water lay the only peril which menaced him; a saying which Lenormand had seemed to ratify. During this particular "hellish, torturing, intolerable winter crossing" he tried to solace his soul with the memory of the gods and heroes of Greece: Alpheus, Arethusa, the Cyprian, Sappho, Odysseus, Nestor. Of what avail, good God? Before his eyes a dirty stinking cabin provided with every horrible appendage of that revolting sickness of the sea; in his ears the groaning, and worse, of his companions in misfortune, and the howling of winds and waves. Battered, enfeebled, shaken and exhausted he landed in Patras on January 1, 1836.

The incalculable nature of Pückler's mind is strikingly apparent in his reactions to the land of Greece. He, who had been so simple and forceful in Africa, became a mass of nerves and morbid moods in the country of classical beauty. He felt none of that serenity and æsthetic content which it is wont to



A STORM.

arouse. He was thrall to an overpowering melancholy, which robbed his love affairs, accidents and adventures of their accustomed gaiety, and made them tragic, portentous, sinister. He had exulted in the deserts of Africa; he was cast down by the barren nature of some of the country in Greece. It was like awakening from a bad dream to come to Mistra and Kyparissia and hear the murmur of beautiful trees. The sight of so many lovely ruins induced nothing more stimulating than romantic regret for the fall of greatness. During the early part of the year the weather was bitterly cold, the inns were wretched, the food and wine poor; but he was not apt to repine at the lack of bodily comfort as he constantly did in Greece. The country was infested by robbers, and Pückler had a curious escape from meeting these gentry of the road. He was preparing to leave Patras for Vostitza on January 26, 1836, when his two spaniels, Francis II. and Norma, were found to have disappeared. Pückler had not ceased to grieve over the loss of Francis I. until he discovered a little dog in Malta, the very twin brother to the first. He bought it from its owner for a considerable sum and made all haste to teach the intelligent little creature its predecessor's tricks. He was keeping this delightful secret from Lucie in order to surprise her on his return. Meanwhile he had also picked up a coal-black bitch, called Norma, who had already saved him twice from being burned to death. Pückler did not love Norma as he loved Francis II.; he might have set out on his journey without the bitch, but never without the dog. The day was spent in searching

for the truant couple, and when they reappeared next morning he still delayed his departure, for he wanted puppies by Francis, and the pair, now shut up together, seemed about to take the necessary steps. That same evening he heard that the house of Missanesi in Vostitza, where he should have been established by then, had been set upon by a band of robbers an hour after his proposed arrival; that most of the inmates had been severely wounded; and that, although the bandits had been finally captured, the populace had made off with the major part of the spoils.

Here was food for much superstitious thought on the subject of the beautiful but uncanny Norma; here also was a further reason for staying on in Patras. It was probably not altogether unwelcome. Not only was Kanaris among his friends in this town; he had also met the fascinating and fateful Tersitza, Trelawny's abandoned wife, an acquaintance which interested him, he confessed, almost too keenly for a bird of passage such as he was. She told him tales of Byron and Trelawny, to whom she was still devotedly attached. He assured her that she would live to love again. She answered that Greek philosophy was not so light-hearted as all that; but her looks belied her words. "Enough for the reader," said Pückler. The intimacy was evidently a warm one. He sat through the trial of the bandits whose victim he might have been, and felt a mysterious ache of sympathy for the leader of those desperate brothers, Sotirios Kondroyanni, "the chief robber of the Peloponnes," as he arrogantly styled him-

self. He was a young man of twenty-two, with the build of an Apollo and a fine face ravaged by the wicked and cruel expression of his staring black eyes. Courageous and ruthless, a highwayman too.

On February 10 Pückler left Patras for Vostitza, Megaspelion, Dhiakofto and Solos, returning through Pyreus to Athens, where he arrived early in March. He had been forced to spend six days at Megaspelion, the roads being impassable owing to an inopportune snowstorm. Held an unwilling prisoner in this magnificent but scandalously neglected monastery in the hills, one of the greatest dandies of the age, surrounded by a crew of slothful, filthy and crassly ignorant monks, was lodged in an icy room crawling with vermin, where he was unable to command the luxury of privacy. A noted gastronomer, and something of a *gourmet*, he found himself swallowing unpalatable food served in a nauseating manner. Never before had he met anything to equal the dirt and squalor in which these monks flourished and waxed fat. Fine men, many of them, but so cynically disregardful of cleanliness that his gorge rose whenever he looked at them. Impertinent and negligent at first, they were all at his feet before the six days were up, scurrying hither and thither at his commands, and intractable only in this, that they would not leave him alone. A *modus vivendi* was established at last, by which only eight at a time might come into his room. Here they squatted on the floor, whispering together if he were reading or writing, whilst he lay at ease in the one warm and spotless place in the monastery, the bed he had brought himself. They

craved humbly for the coveted honour to inspect his things; and he, softened by so much submission, began to chaff and indulge them, in particular the one he called Father Talequale, who spoke a few words of Italian. Pückler presented this scholar with an enormous icicle he had found during a walk in the snow. The gift had a *succès fou*; it was brandished aloft in triumph, passed from hand to hand, and finally thrust into the fire with yells of excitement and delight.

In spite of his idyllic relations with the monks, and the grandeur of the scenery, Pückler was not sorry to leave Megaspelion behind him and be gone on his pilgrimage to the Styx. He had sworn by the Styx that he would see it; and in spite of discouragements, in the teeth of assurances that it was impossible to approach within eyesight of it at that time of the year, he did climb the Khelmos and he did see the Styx hanging over the cliffs like two colossal icicles as tall as a church tower. From a pointed rock just opposite, Pückler made a sketch of this scene, wishing all difficulty-mongers to the devil as he did so for having done their best to deprive him of an unforgettable sight, one of the most beautiful memories of his life's journey. Just as the sketch was completed a cloud came down over the river like a curtain; it was seen no more, and would not be glimpsed again by Pückler in this world. As a reward for his determination he was able to indite a letter to Lucie from the Styx, and to swear by its fatal waters that he loved no one more dearly than herself.

His sojourn in Athens, where he was much in the

society of Otto of Greece and Lewis of Bavaria, and a favoured guest at the house of the Austrian ambassador, Prokesch-Osten, was eventful in many ways, but chiefly remarkable for his first view of the Acropolis. The occasion was as romantic as the whole tone of his mind in Greece. He saw it by night, illuminated in honour of the King of Bavaria by blazing Bengal fires. A dream-like experience, a unique and magic moment, he declared; a fairy vision of golden pillars, rosy marble and emerald grass in the glory of the streaming light. Those who have seen these stately columns glowing in the sun, or shining like silver under the rays of the moon, or high and grey beneath a cloudy sky will not gnash their teeth because they did not see what Pückler saw. Fireworks and the Acropolis are so incongruous that there is something almost indecent in their union; classical and romantic are twain and never the two should meet. But they met and grappled when Pückler was in Greece, following the footsteps of his hero, Odysseus, visiting Delphi and Corinth, mourning over Byron's grave at Missolonghi, and sailing round the islands of the Archipelago.

He had sent his secretary, Jäger, to Germany from Athens in May 1836 with his precious manuscripts, two tiny tortoises, a box full of antiques and Francis II., whom he missed most cruelly, but whom he could no longer withhold from his Schnucke. Jäger, who appears to have been somewhat of an adventurer, never turned up at Muskau; the manuscripts were not forthcoming for more than a year, and Francis II. was lost for good. All this troubled

Pückler perpetually during the next eighteen months. But the root of his curious state of mind in Greece went much deeper than such external misfortunes as these. It was probably not even due to an unhappy love affair, which he took with unwonted seriousness. He was labouring under the emotional strain of communion, not with the gods but with the ghosts of Greece. This made him incapable of rendering the beauty of classical works of art. He loved it all; but an azure and scarlet butterfly settling on a lovely woman's shoe; the mysterious lake of Phonia, with its queer disappearances and its mythical reptiles; even an army of ants invading his bed found a more eloquent reporter than did the temples and the groves. His feelings were flowing along dark channels; he felt a tremor of the strangest pity for a beautiful leper girl; he stooped to screw a Paris jewel into the cropped ear of his Spartan dog, Susannis. He was not himself in Greece. Queer processes were at work in his spirit and he dreamt of hermaphrodites in the moon.

Pückler spent some time in Crete before embarking for Alexandria on December 31, 1836, and discovered without assistance, but with no little disgust, that the famous labyrinth was only a disused quarry. The shadows of Greece were dispelled by the burning African sun. He was immune from conflict as he journeyed along the Nile through Egypt, Nubia and the Sudan. Two magnificent kangshees lent by Mehemet Ali transported him, his *suite* and his effects. Dr Koch, a native of Munich and physician-in-chief to the fleet, was sent with him to watch over his health.

Besides the doctor's servant there was a kawass from the Viceroy's bodyguard; Pückler's dragoman, Giovanni; his German valet, Ackermann; a Greek page from Crete called Janni; two little slave-boys—a negro of eight and an Abyssinian of twelve; an Arab *chef* who had learned French cooking; finally, a miniature harem, composed of two Abyssinian girls—Aishah, aged ten, and Ajamé, whose real name, Macbuba, was as yet unknown to her master.

The vast and elemental land appealed to Pückler from the first. Although he was unimpressed by the pyramids of Djiseh (climbing the largest and engraving Lucie's name on the summit), he surrendered once and for all to Egypt as he faced the mighty sphinx, silent for thousands of years and yet speaking loudly of wonders incredible in modern times and of riddles that remain unsolved. Already half initiated he came to Thebes, Luxor and Karnak, where he was at the height of the supreme hour of his life. The spirit imprisoned and petrified here in towering works of stone was liberated in his presence and expressed itself through him:

The proudest spirit must bow down before Luxor and Karnak. One thinks to see the works of demigods, for men are no longer capable of them to-day. . . . Truly it can be said of the giant hall in Karnak that it outdistances even the vision of a dream, for as one has never seen its like one cannot create it asleep . . . certainly every believer of olden days, feeling with shattered soul and religious tremors the nearness of the gods . . . must have sunk worshipping into the dust.¹

¹ *Aus Mehemet Ali's Reich*, Stuttgart, 1844, ii., pp. 202, 219-221.

He was no less receptive of the darker and more sinister aspect of the ancient cult manifest in the Typhonium :

A terrible image of Typhon, broken colosses and innumerable sphinxes rear their heads above the riotous, luxuriant vegetation. . . . In three or four places several dozen slime-green women of basalt crouch close together with grim lion faces, ghostly and ghastly to behold. . . . It is said that the holy Ibis haunts these lonely waters ; and I could well believe in any eerie apparition here, a place dedicated to the evil god, for I was oppressed by an uncanny sensation.¹

He also felt a nameless, unforgettable horror in the temple of Yerf Hussein ; but the sight of Pylae afforded him the purest pleasure by its graceful beauty. He had been prostrate in Thebes, but here he could enjoy himself as a man. The wonders of Egypt brooded over Pückler as he passed through them, encompassed by raptures beyond imaginings and dangers too deep to sound. He was borne onwards by a spirit that stood in some mystical relation to his own. The land was full of menace, but he journeyed down the Nile secure.

He did not always travel in Oriental idleness on his kangshee. Apart from the expedition with Mehemet Ali into the interior, he rode through the desert from Wadi Halfa to Dongola on a dromedary, an excursion which lasted over a week through the moonlit waste of sand. He would reach his quarters in the morning, and stay sleeping and writing during the

¹ *Aus Mehemet Ali's Reich*, Stuttgart, 1844, ii., pp. 232-233.

daytime, clad in a silk dressing-gown, white linen trousers, yellow boots and a red silk nightcap. In this costume, brown as a nomad, with a long grey beard, he hunted giraffes and rode them in. It was so hot that he risked the danger of crocodiles by bathing in the Nile, whilst his servants beat the water with oars to scare them away. He accounted for one of these reptiles and took the skin home. He also brought down a huge white vulture, and used its feathers for pens. He was thrilled by the sight of some new animals, amongst them hyenas and hippopotami, "one of the most curious creations of divine humour." Down the Nile again went the barks to Djebel-Barkal; then another ten days' ride to Shendy, a journey full of incident, during which the caravan was attacked by a lion. The camels bolted in all directions: much of the equipment was damaged; wines, oils, vinegar and the precious water were spilt; but the lion contented himself with carrying off an ass and a cow. Unluckily, Pückler was some hours behind the caravan, and missed this opportunity of seeing the king of the beasts at last.

From Shendy, Pückler extended his tour to the ruins of Mesaourat, which he was the third European to explore. This was a difficult and dangerous expedition, because there was no water on the way. An alarming meeting with a troop of wandering marauders happily led to no bloodshed, and Pückler was able to engrave the following inscription on the walls of the temple of Mesaourat, between the more pompous announcements of his European predecessors, Caillaud and Linant:

In the year 1837 of our Christian era a German traveller visited these ruins, sent by his familiar spirit, with the intention to penetrate just so far further as his pleasure shall dictate.

His pleasure, determined by the spiritual unrest of all born explorers, led him still southwards through Kartum into the tropical regions beyond the thirteenth latitude and the confines of civilisation down to Wad Medani, and even slightly farther, along the Dender to Mussilinieh. His first sight of tropical forests enchanted him, and he longed to push on; but it was now the middle of June, the rainy season was beginning with great violence and the difficulties were becoming too great. Dr Koch fell ill, and had to be sent back to Kartum. Pückler contracted dysentery, and returned up the river to Abu Harass, where he waited, weak, suffering, often fainting with agony, in the hopes of penetrating to Mandera.

It was here that the gallantry of his spirit stood the proof of a difficult test. He was ill and alone in a deadly climate at the worst time of the year, surrounded by natives who were half savages, with no medical attendant, no comforts, no wine, no restoratives and no adequate protection against the rain. He became so weak that he could hardly walk alone; and yet throughout these nightmarish weeks his one cry was Mandera, where there were supposed to be beautiful ruins and where no European had yet set foot. All his thoughts and all his schemes were directed towards those legendary temples which he had sworn to discover in despite of fate. But this time he did not succeed. The only Arab chief who knew the



PÜCKLER AS A TURK.

district was absent ; Mandera was at least five days' march distant, and there was not a single well on the way ; the surrounding Arabs were hostile ; at least a hundred troops would be necessary and a hundred and fifty camels to carry the water. Pückler did not care to burden Mehemet Ali with the costs of an expedition which he was unable to defray himself. After many *pourparlers* he resigned himself to a disappointing alternative. He sent his dragoman, Giovanni, in his stead ; the latter spoke Arabic like a native, and went disguised as a Beduin, with a small escort and one camel. He returned safely with the soothing information that the ruins were uninteresting and almost completely destroyed. Then Pückler turned his face northwards, on July 1, 1837.

He considered himself now completely Africanised, but his Western energy remained. He had not been able to take a secretary with him from Alexandria on account of the expense ; at the end of an exhausting day's march in an enervating climate he had often written as many as sixteen reams a day ; he had not only kept his journal but had also completed two volumes on Egypt and taken copies of his numerous letters ; whilst hardly a day would pass without some pages being addressed to Lucie. He might well say that few men would be capable in their fifty-second year of supporting so many and such varied fatigues ; and one cannot but agree with him when he summed up his return to health with the confident words : " In the end the spirit conquered the flesh."

On the northward journey Pückler located the site

of the labyrinth of Crocodilopolis, a discovery which was later confirmed by Lepsius ; he saw many hundred temples, and revisited Thebes ; but on the whole he took the return journey more easily, being still weak from the effects of dysentery and the climate. He had left Macbuba in Assuan, and although she too had been ill during his absence, nothing could dim his delight at seeing her again. His bark must now have presented a strange and fantastic appearance. His Dongolese horses and his dromedary had been sent overland to Cairo in the charge of an Arab servant called Abufar, whose life Pückler had saved in Macheriff ; but what with his harem and his menagerie there was an interesting variety of life on board. Janni, the page, had been drowned on the way out ; Susannis, the Spartan dog, had died ; a much-loved gazelle who had often shared Pückler's bed at night had met with a fatal accident ; but an ostrich, two baby crocodiles, a giant tortoise with a shell like mother-of-pearl and eyes as clear as stars ; some parrots, four monkeys, one a particular favourite called Abeleng ; two gazelles, a young giraffe, an ibis, some colibris, and a chameleon perched on a mimosa-tree, provided for its special benefit, afforded Pückler plenty of entertainment as the kangshee gently floated north whilst he lay amongst his cushions, waited upon by slaves, and passed his experiences in review.

It was magic—black magic and white magic, but chiefly black—which was the burden of his thoughts. One of the *illuminati* in Cairo had impressed him more than he cared to own with tales of Egyptian witchcraft and devil-worship. He could not forget the dance of

the howling dervishes ; it had seemed like a despairing summons to evil spirits or an infernal dance of demons. It made his flesh creep still. He tried to think of Mademoiselle Maritza instead, a beautiful woman, enfolded in a tragic gloriole, a magnetic, transparent veil, the symbol of the tragic gift—Tragedy—Death. Why had Giovanni painted his name in those colossal letters on a granite sarcophagus in Bab-el Melech? A *macabre* surprise which might prove to be a sinister omen, for it had proved impossible to obliterate the inscription. And who was that strange old man who had overtaken them in the desert, disappearing as inexplicably as he had come? The leader of the escort, visibly frightened, had muttered uneasily of supernatural visitants who boded no good to those who saw them. An eerie figure on a dwarf donkey, coal-black with a long white beard. But probably he was just a harmless old man, for the Arabs were dreadfully superstitious. Hadn't a fakir in Haffir actually stolen Pückler's manuscripts to use them as amulets against fever? He had been lucky to recover them, but one page remained behind in the desert. Pages—Leaves—Petals. They say that the Arabian forget-me-not loses its petals at once if it is rashly presented to a friend. Now why did that make him think of Lucie? "A woman at home grieving sorely over his absence, and he would do well to return"; that was the fortune the old hag of a gipsy had told him in Medinet Fajum. It would be hard to return to Muskau after this—the desert and its secrets, the waters of old Nile, the mystery of Thebes—to put all these behind him and go back? And to

return without having seen the unicorn; that was hard indeed.

Pückler's courage and endurance shone more clearly during his voyage down the Nile than at any other period of his life. He was physically buoyant rather than strong; and although he was organically sound he had a delicate constitution and a highly strung nervous system, so that his stoical disregard of hardships and suffering had an almost heroic quality, notably at Abu Harass. But to be great is not always to be happy, in the pedestrian meaning of the term. The exaltation which upheld him in Egypt was of an exacting nature; he felt a comforting sensation of release when he left that country for Syria and Asia Minor, his "dear Orient" of later memories. Like a medium abandoned by his control, he slipped thankfully back to a more normal plane, declared himself heartily sick of "monotonous Egypt," and complained more than once of the bad effect it had produced upon his health and spirits. And yet his journey in the Near East lacks the peculiar fascination of the pilgrimage along the Nile. Jerusalem was not and could not be for him the religious revelation which Thebes had been. His enthusiasm for the beauties of Greece had been far less rapturous than his ecstasies over the wonders of Egypt; for art and religion must present themselves in their titanic aspect if they were to shake his soul. Let him moralise in the Holy City over its monuments, its history and its sacred associations; let him shake his head over the bickerings and scandals between the Jews and the Christians whilst the Turks kept order; let him talk, and talk at length,

about Christianity in the ethical and enlightened manner of the eighteenth century, the deeps of his nature were unstirred.

The unusual favours which Pückler enjoyed in Syria, whither he had been wafted on a beautiful brig assigned to him by Mehemet Ali, are most interestingly illustrated by the fact that his harem was housed in a monastery in Jerusalem without demur. He was also successful in obtaining an entrance into the holy of holies of the mosque of Omar Chalife, not only for himself but also for three Franciscan monks. They begged him so eagerly to procure them this unique opportunity of inspecting the Christian relics which were supposed to be in the hands of the infidels that he had not the heart to refuse. When the Governor and the Mullah protested against the presence of the friars he hesitated for a moment. But they looked at him with such piteous pleading in their eyes that he took his courage in both hands, made an eloquent little speech on tolerance, not forgetting to mention the holy name of Mehemet Ali, and won the day. The incorrigible Giovanni thereupon scribbled his master's name on the Gate of Paradise, an indiscretion which happily remained unnoticed, for it might have cost them dear.

Thus Pückler saw Jerusalem ; then passing through the monastery of Saba, camping romantically on the shores of the Dead Sea, bathing voluptuously in the river of Jordan, visiting Nazareth and the lake of Tiberias, he came at length to Beyrouth, to storm the fortress of Daër Djoun. According to the German, the most truthful of men, and to good Dr Merion,

who was incapable of invention, Lady Hester was conquered after a preliminary epistolary skirmish; the gates of Daër Djoun were thrown open, Pückler entered and remained for eight days. But there are some stories which, however well authenticated, will always seem too good to be true. They are too apposite to command belief. Something tells us that Archimedes never really ran naked through the streets shouting "Eureka!" and that Queen Victoria never really promised to be good, whatever the historians may say. The meeting between Lady Hester Stanhope and Prince Pückler-Muskau has an even more legendary quality; it reads like the invention of a poet bestriding the winged steed Pegasus, begotten by imagination out of that jade fancy in the stables of romance.

The Prince came to the enchanted castle to consult the sibyl anent his fate. He was conducted into her presence after nightfall, for no one might see her by day. She received him in state, she cast his horoscope and foretold the future whilst her eyes probed to the depths of his soul. Night after night they talked together, for she had messages of much import to communicate and wonderful stories to relate. Spellbound he drank them in. The enchantress was also a priestess, and initiated him into the secrets of her creed, swearing him to eternal silence, a vow which he kept until death. In a garden fragrant with roses he was shown the sacred steed, born miraculously saddled, who would carry the new Messiah into Jerusalem, and the milk-white mare on which the prophetess would ride by his side.



LADY HESTER STANHOPE.

The holy charger licked the Prince's hand, a sign that he was not as other mortals, but fit to hear strange truths. The Queen of the Arabs thereupon took him completely into her confidence, and revealed herself as a lady in distress. Chivalrously he proffered his services, and became her knight errant for the nonce, sealing the oath with a royal gift, the person of one of his slaves; then he rode forth to espouse her cause. Queens are ever imperious and hasty; she took umbrage because he dallied by the way. The tie between them snapped.

It will not do. Read Pückler's plain, unvarnished statement; spend a happy hour over Dr Merion's matter-of-fact and highly amusing account; turn if you will to the letters, which reproach you as silent witnesses, there remains an unreality about those eight days and nights which defies material proof. It is natural enough that both should have been drawn eastwards, since "there is a longing for the East, very commonly felt by proud people when goaded by sorrow."¹ But it is strange that they should have been so much alike in their daring, eccentricity and arrogance: born Oriental despots, acclaimed by the Arabs in much the same way and understanding the Eastern temperament as if by divination. It is stranger still that they had a like belief in magic, the same intimate conviction of destiny and supernatural powers. It is almost incredible that such gallantry and weirdness should be abroad in duplicate at the same time. But that she should have broken her vow of solitude to

¹ Kinglake uses this phrase in speaking of Lady Hester Stanhope in *Eöthen*.

admit this one stranger within her gates staggers belief. It is stretching the long arm of coincidence too far. Such things only happen in fairy-tales ; it was an illusion, it was an hallucination, it was a dream.

But it was a dream which made reality pale. Even the interesting visit to the Chief of the Druses at Daër-el-Cammar fell rather flat after those nights in which Pückler had dreamt of a spiritual communion with the lady of Daër Djoun. Yet the great light blue eyes of Emir Beshir, whose uncanny look betrayed cruelty as well as cunning, revealed one of those problematical natures in which the Prince took a special delight—capable of deep dissimulation, and hard for friend or foe to read aright.

The next halt was Damascus, where nearly a month was spent, including the humiliating excursion to Nedja. Then onward once more to the ruins of Balbeck and the cedars of Lebanon. Neither could impress a man who had seen the greatest monuments of Greek and Egyptian civilisation, and who made a cult of trees. He considered Balbeck imposing in mass, but decadent in architecture ; and the cedars, for the most part withering, drew from him nothing but flaming indignation on the subject of all the Goths and Vandals who had contributed to their destruction by carving their names on the bark—foremost among them was Lamartine, who had not even visited the cedars in person, but had pilloried himself at second hand by letters a foot long, thus hastening the end of the greatest of them all. Pückler was compensated for these disappointments by discovering near Aleppo some beautiful ancient ruins

not shown on any map, which no other traveller had seen, and which were completely unknown in Aleppo ; surrounded by masses of rocks lying like mushrooms on the ground, they presented a most romantic and puzzling appearance. A peasant living there all alone with his family told Pückler that these ruins had once been a town ; that Solomon had cursed it ; that the rocks had then sprung up round it, and that no one but himself would dare to live there. Something mysterious and lovely, thought Pückler, as he continued on his way.

He visited Antiochia, Suedia and Seleucia *en route* for Alexandretta, from where he set sail for Smyrna, intending to land at Cyprus and Rhodes on the way. But he had reckoned without his host Poseidon, whose never-sleeping hatred he may possibly have forgotten, although it is needless to say that he had crossed from Egypt to Syria in a storm. The gales which set upon him this time, driving the ship hither and thither between Cyprus and Rhodes, tearing the sails, splitting the masts, snapping the anchor chains, were of a nature which he had never met before ; rolling thunder, flashing lightning, venomously hissing rain, balefully shrieking winds, wrathfully bellowing waves ; unearthly sighings and groanings from the ship ; all this combined to produce the effect of a pandemonium of elemental forces at which the bravest heart might quail. Pückler, although not unmoved, summoned his courage to meet death in a dignified way. Macbuba had been seasick on the voyage from Egypt, but had cheered herself by taking a cold

bath after every attack of this surprising new illness, joking and laughing with Aishah at each of the manifestations of the malady. She now missed her little companion, dreeing her weird under the stern wing of Lady Hester Stanhope, very much indeed. In her anguish and fear she sang piteous Abyssinian songs, completely convinced that this was the end. But the ship miraculously escaped destruction, and the party eventually landed at Stanchio, proceeding to Smyrna by land.

In his wanderings in Asia Minor—which included Magnesia, Ephesus, Sardes and Nicæa—Pückler was positively enchanted by the beauty of the scenery and the fertility of the land. Again and again he lamented that he could not live in this divine country; and he advised all those who could to settle in Asia Minor and colonise it. He considered Sardes one of the most beautiful places he had ever visited, in the list of which he included the Sauwan, Mistra and the Dead Sea. It was the romantic nature of these districts, he maintained, which appealed to him so much, engendering a happy, gently stimulating mood; the very thought of them later was a comfort to him and often soothed his spirit. Egypt was not mentioned among these lovely memorable spots; Egypt had played an austerer part in his life.

He was no less indefatigable in Syria and Asia Minor in his search for ancient ruins than he had been in Africa, Greece and Egypt. Macbuba, who was learning Italian, would often call out in despair: “O caro, lasciate alfin rovine. Perchè?

Andiamo pranzare." One is tempted to agree with the little Abyssinian, and to leave him exploring alone; but a word or two must be said on the subject of his archæological investigations. Pückler was a highly intelligent and widely read traveller. Shaw, Wilkinson, Champollion, Belzoni, Burkhardt, Calvadene, Rüppel, Waddington, Linant, Caillaud, Prokesch, Chandler, Choiseul - Gouffier, Barbier-Dubocage, Lamartine and Chateaubriand amongst the moderns; Homer, Pausanias, Pliny, Strabo, Diodorus, Lucian and the Bible among the ancients were all known to him, consulted, compared and at times refuted. His adverse judgment of Lamartine, who was all poetic licence and misleading statements, "un perpetuel poisson d'avril," seems to have been justified, certainly in so far as the poet's account of his interview with Lady Hester Stanhope was concerned; she declared that she had spoken to him for five minutes only: the speeches he reports would have taken an hour or two to deliver, and according to the lady's irate comments they were all either invented or falsified. On the other hand, Pückler's warm appreciation of the beauty and exactitude of Chateaubriand's *Itinéraire* show that he was a competent critic of style. More than this, his suggestions as to the position of the battlefield of Issus, and his location of the sites of Labrands, Alabanda and Magnesia are extremely interesting; he certainly discovered the site of Magnesia, which was recognised and described later by French and English explorers, but which Lucas, Chandler, Pococke, Choiseul-Gouffier, Picenini, Dallaway and Dr Smith

had been unable to find. All this serves to prove that had Pückler been employed, by his own or any other Government, in an archæological capacity he might have become a famous explorer and an archæologist of renown.

Meanwhile his time was running short; he left Nicæa for Constantinople by mail in June 1839, and remained on the Bosphorus until the end of August.

Sultan Mahmud died before Pückler's promised audience fell due; but the German saw the sick man being painfully supported up the steps of a mosque shortly after his arrival. He was overwhelmed by such a flood of passionate pity that he remained rooted to the spot, gazing at the Sultan through his eyeglass and quite forgetting to uncover his head. This was taken much amiss by the *suite*, who favoured Pückler with dark looks which brought him to his senses. But Mahmud, already on the threshold of a world where forms and ceremonies avail little, may have been better pleased, if he were aware of the incident at all, by this spontaneous tribute than by the conscience-stricken salutes with which Pückler greeted him on his reappearance.

The Prince probably went out to see his horses at Burnabat after this mischance, in the hopes of restoring his equanimity by a sight of their "starry" eyes. There was a considerable number to inspect. Mehemet Ali had presented Pückler with a valuable foal called after the donor, who had picked it out himself from the stables of Shubra. It became an

excellent hunter, but was killed jumping a river on the day of the fall of St Jean d'Acre. Ibrahim's two foals were much less prized by the recipient: the best in the Pasha's stables, certainly, but the breed was poor. Of the two horses acquired in Damascus, for £220, one was subsequently sold to a Freiherr von Stauken in Lithuania; the other, Bargut, a splendid racehorse, succumbed, with all the remaining Arab and English horses in Pückler's stables, to an epidemic in September 1846. He bought another horse in Homs for £100, and picked up a valuable mare for a song in Hama. Here he also purchased Auwam the Swimmer for £100, and sold it five years later to a Polish nobleman for £200. It was a strongly built animal of eighteen and lived to thirty. Abugosch, a wicked but beautiful creature, remained with Pückler until the end, but Basra, the prize of them all, of the purest Nedjdi blood, was later sold to Freiherr von Stauken. Two more horses from Aleppo completed the stud of twelve, including two mares, which he brought home from the East, although one of them died of the colic in Budapesth.

The dromedary arrived safely in Muskau long before Pückler, who travelled home with his menagerie, a little negro slave-boy and Macbuba. He had enriched his equipment with twenty lovely carpets, a mummy, and experiences by the score. But the most outstanding feature of the last eighteen months was the fact that he was turning home. Although in Dongola he had given minute instructions to Lucie about the arrangement of his rooms,

and had sent her elaborate details from Balbeck of the magnificent reception she was to prepare for his home-coming, yet only a little later he countermanded this function and begged her to let him slip into the castle unobserved. As early as Algiers he had warned her that he was contemplating another journey, this time to America and India; he now began to declare vociferously that the very thought of Europe was unendurable: that he certainly could not stay longer than twelve months at Muskau, and must then be off again through Scandinavia and Russia to Persia and India taking Macbuba with him. He had hitherto only hopped about like a flea, he protested; he really must see something of the world before he died, and not be put to the blush whenever he met a real traveller. Unless Lucie consented to come with him, and establish herself in the East, he must leave her again. He would take such and such servants, and this and that in his equipment. He uttered the pious prayer that the cook and the washerwoman might make a match of it, a convenient arrangement which would keep them both happy on their travels.

Alas! it was not to be; and if ever this union of souls took place, Germany was the scene of their domestic bliss. Pückler's travels on the grand scale were over; the climax of his life was behind him; its glory was in the west. But his roving habits clung to him until his death. "I need the light of the world," he would tell Lucie after one of his frequent illnesses, or if the planting season had failed, for he still sought relief from depression and

heartbreaks by bolting off into the blue. At first he lacked the spirit to leave Muskau for long; surrounded at home by trophies and memories, he quitted them only to circulate languidly round the various German courts. But from 1845 onwards his journeys extended farther afield, although he rarely broke new ground. He explored the Thuringian forest in 1845 and travelled through Austria to Italy in 1846. Climbing to the top of the Freiburg cathedral tower, he bracketed it with the Pyramids and Karnak as the third miracle of architecture he had seen. He journeyed down the Danube in 1848 and came to Prague in 1849. He crossed the Channel in 1847, and again in 1851 to see the Great Exhibition, for the tourist was also dying hard. He spent some months in Paris in the winter of 1853-1854, observing life under the Second Empire; but from 1855 onwards, although he zigzagged over Europe at intervals, the wheels were clearly running down. Once more to Switzerland, Italy, the Tyrol and France. One final little flutter to Wildungen in 1868, where he went for "almost dangerous" rides alone in romantic scenery; and got back once at midnight to find all the servants in an uproar, certain that the old man of eighty-three would never return alive.

It was his last effort, although he would not own it, even to himself. He announced to Ludmilla Assing, a month or two before his death, that he was determined to pay her a surprise visit in Italy. Ever and again he recurred to this topic, for the dying man still hoped to escape once more from durance and win his way to the sun.

None of these latter-day tours and trips had slaked the thirst of a rover who had once drunk deep of the waters of freedom. He never conquered his nomadic heart, or ceased to long for the East. At the age of eighty-three he seriously contemplated leaving Branitz and establishing himself in his "dear Orient" for good. It was too late. The needle of his compass had swung towards the eternal wastes, and he put out to a shoreless sea, still remembering and regretting those days of high adventure and romance. The lines from Heine which he prefixed to his book on Upper Egypt were the emblem of the last thirty years of his life, and expressed the poignancy of his desire :

A pine-tree stands alone on a desolate northern
height ;
He slumbers whilst ice and snow-flakes bedeck him
with a mantle of white
And dreams of a distant palm-tree in Eastern lands
alone
Mourning in sorrowful silence on a ledge of burning
stone.

CHAPTER IV

THE RAKE

ANY psychologist worthy of the name would have prophesied disaster had he entered the castle of Muskau when Hermann was a child. The stage was palpably set for the corruption of innocence. The studied neglect which the father meted out to the son and heir was less positively harmful than the irresponsible attentions of his mother, who dressed him up and played with him at intervals, only to toss him impatiently aside when some more amusing occupation came her way, and who was not above making him the subject of nerve-racking educational experiments if one of his transitory tutors happened to be to her liking. The servants spoiled him hopelessly; they made him privy to their gossip on the subject of the estrangement between his parents and to their comments on the harshness, surliness and miserliness of the Count: the waywardness and wantonness of his wife. The sharp-witted urchin, whose nurse had already taught him undesirable habits, was so alarmingly precocious by temperament that he was well aware that the relations between his mother and the last edition of the tutors went further than the previous philanderings he had witnessed in the nursery. At this point he was dispatched to Uhyst to add to his knowledge of life.

The Herrnhuter or Moravians are an unpleasing Protestant sect, who treat their anthropomorphic gods with a familiarity which they believe to be mysticism. In those days corruption and hypocrisy were rife among the brethren at Uhyst, and the lovely little boy was soon in the clutches of one of the masters. He then struck up a friendship on similar lines with a fellow-pupil, which made the teacher of youth so jealous that he threatened to betray him to the principal. Hermann coolly spiked his guns by reporting the master's advances to him, and the pedagogue was dismissed. The child listened with cynical amusement to a long lecture on vice and continued his secret pleasures. The seed had been sown and the tendency was not eradicated, although it played a minor part in his life. It was probably kept within bounds at Uhyst by his sentimental passion for a little girl cousin, later Countess of Kielmansegge, with whom he wept tears of religious fervour whilst he thrilled in his baby heart to the touch of her black silk frock. They were both rapt adorers of Christ and entirely untainted by the surrounding hypocrisy; their immature piety was as rapturously sincere as it was touchingly absurd.

He lived, it must be remembered, in an age of relaxed morals, which more or less openly countenanced many a curious relationship, much promiscuity and frequent divorces. A remarkable instance of such light living and elastic principles is presented by the appearance of Hermann's mother with her new husband for a visit of five months to her old home. She came with twenty horses, a whole retinue of

servants and gaily established herself in the shooting-lodge. Hermann had just returned from Dessau and was fifteen years old; his mother was at the dangerous age of thirty and at the height of her elfin fascination. He fell headlong in love with her, to her unconcealed delight, and between them they made his stepfather frantically jealous. Later, when he was wandering over Europe, she amused herself by writing him moralising letters, in which she sometimes lectured him sharply. She knew all about his poverty, but airily refused her help, making, however, more than once the eccentric proposal that he should come and live with her as a tutor to his little stepbrother, Max, an idea which evidently tickled her sense of the *bizarre*. Pückler made graceful gestures of acceptance, but wisely left it at that; his position between mother and stepfather would have been awkward, to say the least, and unlikely to have recommended itself to his sire. In other letters to his mother he displayed an irritability, bitterness and even insolence, which show that his childhood was not forgotten and in no danger of being forgiven because he had later fallen in love with her, and she had stooped to flirt with him. His attitude towards her was that of a lover to a woman who had wronged him deeply, and need expect no mercy at his hands. He never scrupled to paint his poverty in the darkest colours; when he fell seriously ill at Lucerne and was threatened with consumption he gave her an extremely alarmist account:

Complètement étique, crachant du sang, prêt à rendre le dernier soupir, les médecins ont eu la

bonté de m'assurer que je n'avais plus que quelques années tout au plus à vivre.¹

He also tried to frighten his father and his sister, Clémentine, but they all remained completely unmoved, and he wrote to his sister acidly :

N'est-ce pas bien doux pour moi d'apprendre que le mot d'étiq̃ue que vous avez trouvé dans ma lettre, vous a même un peu effrayé (*sic*) ; cependant on n'a guères d'exemple que les personnes en droit de s'appliquer ce mot fatal en soient jamais revenu ; raison plausible, il me semble, de s'effrayer un peu beaucoup ou au moins de le dire quand c'est une presonne aimé (*sic*) de laquelle il s'agit.²

Between his trifling and heedless mother, his unconcerned young sisters and his stony-hearted father, he was not in an enviable position as regards sympathy and love. Unavailingly he pursued the policy of terrifying his mother into paying him attention. In a wild letter from Rome he recounted in a harrowing manner a frustrated attempt to blow out his brains—a melodramatic tale probably not founded on fact, but conveying the emotional truth of the desperate feelings she had aroused in her son.

In his youth all his romantic bitterness was turned against his mother ; it was not until after his father's death that he realised how greatly the latter had been to blame for his misdirected boyhood. He flared up at times when addressing him, for he was a hot-headed

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, iv., p. 403 ; letter from Pückler to his mother ; July 1808.

² *Ibid.*, iv., p. 405 ; letter from Pückler to his sister Clémentine ; July 1808.

youngster, but he would try to atone for such outbursts by little presents, ungraciously received, and contrite, loving messages through Wolff:

Give my dear father a thousand, thousand greetings. . . . Tell him not to brood over his grief. He must eat well, drink well and amuse himself with his mistress and his hunting. . . . He must do his utmost to close his ears to dark thoughts, so that he may preserve his precious life for his children, who would willingly lay down their lives for his.¹

When the elder Pückler's health began to fail Hermann was almost distraught, for his mind was not of the sort which lingers round the subject of dead men's shoes; nevertheless, hot anger was gradually corroding his heart. He wrote to his mother in 1809 that he had made a vow never to see his family again in this life; neglected, ill-treated and misunderstood, he felt no resentment against them, but demanded the right to be left alone. He concluded with the bitter wish that he might one day be able to reimburse to the last farthing all that he had ever cost his parents, and which had been so openly begrudged. A tirade like this, even allowing for his Byronic attitude towards the recipient, suggests the fearful question: "In what furnace was thy brain?"

Hence, perhaps, the despairing ravings of his early love letters. The women who compensated him for the coldness of his family were obviously more than kind, but the tone he adopted towards them was wilfully gloomy. He kept the rough drafts of these

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, iv., pp. 424-425; letter from Pückler to Wolff; dated from Rome, May 20, 1809.

epistles for further use, and corrected them so much that they are almost illegible. They are nearly all written in French, and the style is so highly conventional that the impression is gained of a very young author attempting a love story in letters. Those cruel and adorable Adèles, Dianas, Jeannettes and Carolines were all the most beautiful and fatal of their sex. The notes with which they honoured him were always covered with kisses and tears; sleep and rest fled his couch during the course of each new affair; one after another he implored them not to deprive him of all hope and thus plunge a dagger into his heart. Even his letters to Julie von Gallenberg do not read very differently from those addressed to more passing fancies. He met her in Rome, fell in love at first sight and wooed her to such purpose that they were soon declared lovers. Being unhappily married she was a predestined victim, for Pückler was never one to trouble his head over the rights or wrongs of the preposterous class of humanity called husbands:

Ces maris sont naturellement des bêtes à cornes, et si par hazard s'en trouve un qui fait exception à la règle, c'est ce que les naturalistes appellent un jeu de la nature.¹

Everything was therefore as it should be according to his code, and yet he addressed her continually in the exalted, despairing style of an unhappy passion. The affection which cast such fantastic shadows was solid enough. Although he was in great financial

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, v., p. 442; letter from Pückler to Julie von Gallenberg; dated from Strassburg, February 26, 1810.

straits and in a very panic about debt he did not hesitate to borrow fifty pounds from an acquaintance in order to extricate Julie from an embarrassing situation; his actions were more practical than his words.

The probably unparalleled frankness with which Pückler treated women later is already discernible at times in the flood of third-rate sentiment which he poured out to them now. Stung by jealousy he could inform a Lisette, with brutal insolence, that she would soon be able to say with truth: "All men are for me, and I am for all"; whilst the following passage reads like an echo from the Restoration refrain: "And the maid may be chaste who has never been tried":

Quant à votre vertu—cette vertu par excellence dont vous parlez sans cesse . . . je vous l'avoue volontiers, que je ne crois jamais à son existence et que suivant mes principes et mon expérience, j'ai dû supposer que je n'ai pas eu le bonheur de vous plaire. . . .¹

All these missives, in spite of their passion, excitement and jealousy, are obviously the products of ephemeral feelings. But there are five German letters which make a different impression. They were almost certainly addressed to Frau von Alopäus, the wife of a Russian diplomatist in Berlin, who was the first *grande passion* of his life. He was still romantic, and more sentimental than ever; but his devotion and grief are in marked contrast to the ardours, sighs and tears with which he had regaled his other mistresses.

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, i., pp. 467-468; letter from Pückler to an anonymous recipient; not dated.

He deeply regretted the marriage of this lady, and longed to have met her earlier. She seems to have melted something in his nature which had withstood the fierce flames of passion. Other women had charmed his senses, he told her, but she had touched his heart. The sombre melancholy of the Germanic race rose to the surface when this dashing young dandy, accustomed to taking all manner of "sweet liberties" with women, found himself facing the formidable impediment of love between himself and his desires; the progress of the rake was stayed.

He did not keep out of mischief for long; he would dearly have liked to seduce Julie von Kospoth, for instance, but she was happily married and clung to her virtue with some heart-burnings on both sides. It was a rare experience for Pückler; his fascination for most women was such that it annihilated even the wish to resist him, and by the time he was engaged to Lucie he was an irreclaimable Don Juan. It was lucky, perhaps, that neither of them had strict notions of marital fidelity. Lucie had been the mistress of Bernadotte before she separated from her first husband and was willing to allow the second any amount of rope. He was unfaithful to her many times during their engagement, for his increasing affection for his Schnucke could not wean him from his rooted habits. He wrote her indecent letters, embellished with cabbalistic signs, and went into physiological details of his frequent lapses from virtue; nor will his ready sacrifice of a little page-boy to Lucie's feelings of propriety win him universal esteem. He was unable to sympathise with her wish to marry off Adelheid

before she joined her hand with his; for his own simple conception of married bliss was to live with them both together at Muskau *à la Turk*. But Lucie was adamant on this point. Adelheid, who had quicksilver in her veins, and the temperament of a bacchante, was safely disposed of to a Count Carolath before her own wedding took place at Muskau, where it was celebrated in a magnificent manner, and certainly illuminated by those fairy-lamps, fireworks and torchlight processions which were always so dear to Pückler's heart.

The honeymoon was to be spent in Paris, but it was months before the bridegroom could be persuaded to start on this trip, and when he did so it was in a most Pückleresque frame of mind, for he could think of nothing else but his passionate love for Helmine. It was altogether a fantastic affair and often puzzled the sufferer himself. Lucie's adopted daughter was either her own illegitimate child by Bernadotte, or, as was generally stated, had been born in wedlock to a coachman. She was then a sylph-like creature of sixteen, one of those freakishly charming mortals who drive men distracted by their coldness and the elusiveness of their occasional yieldings. Frederick William III. was also fast in her toils at this period and talking of a morganatic marriage; but she would have none of it; she was willing to grace his dinners and his balls, but remained unresponsive to his love. In the end he gave it up and married the Princess Liegnitz; but he always remained attached to Helmine, and presented her with a patent of nobility so that she might be admissible at Court.

Pückler meanwhile was like one demented; and Helmine, who had been unmoved by the sighs of a monarch, seemed tantalisingly ready to fall into her stepfather's arms. To the end of his life he believed in the coachman story; but Lucie, who certainly loved Helmine to the full as much as Adelheid, opposed her husband's infatuation so strongly that there can be little doubt as to whose child she was. Helmine was not allowed to accompany them to Paris, and the bridegroom underwent agonies of misery at the separation, which he was quite unable to conceal. In 1823 he could still not look back without a shudder at the martyrdom he had then endured. On their return Lucie strove to keep the wayward pair apart; but she was forced to give way at times, for Pückler, goaded by imaginings and thwarted desires, behaved like a man possessed. Her effort to save the situation by arranging a marriage for her ward met with wild lamentations from her husband, enlivened on one occasion by the grotesque appeal to choose a man who was old and ugly. He also begged frantically to be allowed one last undisturbed fortnight in Helmine's company before the wedding took place, that she might occasionally regret her first friend in the arms of another.

He was temperamentally incapable of seeing the question socially. What natural reason was there, he demanded, why he should not gratify his passion for Helmine, which had nothing to do with the tender affection he felt for his wife? She satisfied him in every way but one; could she grudge him this pleasure at the hands of another? It was a

fair question, for the husband and wife were not on passionate terms; but Lucie was still determined to protect Helmine, who showed no wish to defend herself. The "natural reason," if there were one, would make it imperative that she should. The situation lasted for several years. Lucie experienced a number of small defeats, but she never lost control and the fever wore itself out at last. He was almost cured by 1823; although a certain tenderness remained for the "little Cinderella," who was married to an impecunious lieutenant, von Blücher, in 1824. It was a long time before she ceased altogether to excite his nerves. He had loved her, he said later, "à plusieurs reprises et pour un temps inouï." It had been more than three parts fancy, but it had occasioned him intervals of real misery, restless fretting, and wearing desire over a space of five years. His "Helminomania" worked so violently in his imagination that he spurned all other women for a time. His old flame, Frau von Alopäus, prepared at last to grant him favours for which he would have sold his soul a few years earlier, found that her reign was over at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle. He withstood her, even in the dangerous intimacy of a nocturnal *tête-à-tête*. Sophie Gay, as lovely as she was talented, also laid an unsuccessful siege to his preoccupied heart. She was coolly deserted in the middle of the night, hopefully shamming a hypnotic trance, and in great beauty. Pückler rang for her maid and took French leave although she had the most glorious eyes in the world. Others fared no better. "Ces femmes m'obsèdent, et je suis

à leur voix aussi sourd qu'un rocher."¹ A most unusual state of affairs. This obsession for Helmine shows to what a pitch of excitement resistance could bring him; it also shows that no social considerations had the slightest power over him: he was outside all ordinary laws.

This did not always manifest itself as ruthlessness. On the contrary, his freedom from convention favoured his naturally extensive sympathies. Few men probably have treated the women who make a trade of love as humanely as Pückler. They were always individuals to him; he loved to hear the story of their lives; he allowed them to stay sleeping through the day in his lodgings if they were tired. He brought a little girl home from the theatre in London, one night, whose past had been so romantic, and rang so true, that his imagination transformed her into an enchanted and fallen princess; he delighted in her tenderness and artlessness; he felt a "real passion" for Englishwomen of this class, he said, because they possessed sentiment as well as beauty. He could see no essential difference between them and others of a different world. He paid court to Lady Ellenborough, "the most beautiful woman in London," who deserted her husband in favour of Prince Schwarzenberg in 1830, and died as the wife of a Beduin chief in the desert of Damascus; he flirted with Lady Castlereagh; he philandered with Lady Garvagh, and found the "eternal feminine" everywhere much alike.

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, v., p. 209; letter from Pückler to Lucie; dated from Aix-la-Chapelle, November 11, 1818.

There were some outstanding exceptions, amongst them his second *grande passion*, Henriette Sontag, the singer. Pückler was not the only one to adore her; her grace and her gift had already driven half Germany mad and brought a crowd of noble suitors to her feet. Lucie's brother, Prince Hardenberg; that most romantic of ambassadors, Prince Esterhazy, and Lord Clanwilliam were all desperately in love with her, and she had the usual number of fictitious engagements to her credit. But her reputation had never yet been blown upon; it was recounted as a miracle that no princely gifts and no ardent sighs had hitherto purchased the slightest favour from this unspoiled beauty of the bewildering eyes and the bewitching voice. "Elle est unique dans son genre, mais son genre est petit," Catalini said of her, and Pückler, who had heard her in Berlin, where she struck him as "une franche petite coquine," never admired her singing as much as Pasta's. But he fell so violently in love that he was staggered. Had he misunderstood himself and everyone else until now, he wondered. Had he been chasing after soap-bubbles which vanished when he seized them and ignored the possibility of a greater treasure, buried in his heart? In the throes of an overpowering, overwhelming sensation, passion united with love, he underwent the painful process of shifting values. Henriette was in like case. Caught unaware, blindly, almost unwittingly, they came together, and Pückler began to dream of a marriage in which the English pound sterling no longer officiated as best man. But the *liaison* lasted

for a few days only. The singer came to her senses and stunned him with a partial revelation of the bitter truth. She was either engaged or already secretly married to Count Rossi, and put an end to her relations with Pückler almost before they had begun. She nearly broke her lover by doing so. She had completely cured him of his love for soap-bubbles, he mourned; she had broken all his playthings for ever; woe to the unhappy; there is but one boon, but one benefit for them, and that is death.

For a time the dark waters of this great sorrow engulfed him completely; he gave himself up to tragic grieving and an almost alarming despair. Six months later, when he felt himself to be completely cured, he wrote to Lucie from Paris that he was now convinced of the reality of love potions; his condition then had been too abnormal to be explained by any other theory, and the very thought of it still frightened him horribly. The beautiful Eurafrican, Mrs L., whom he met in Athenrye, probably assisted to hasten his recovery. Her dark blood attracted him strongly, for it gave her an exotic charm and a romantic aura; and yet he made up his mind to fly; fearing, he wrote, the enervating influence of Capua and the slavery of Africa. He was clearly still afraid of being lured into tragic depths.

Was this also the reason why his next important affair was, oddly enough, conducted solely by correspondence with a lady he had never met? They met in 1842, by which time their relations were calmer; but between the years 1832 and 1835 a



HENRIETTE SONTAG.

correspondence of a most passionate nature raged between Pückler-Muskau and "the most demure, reserved and decorous creature in existence," who played the part of "sunlight through waste weltering chaos"¹ to Thomas Carlyle. It is not too much to say that Sara Austin was at one time hopelessly enslaved by the "Dear Original," of whom she was the "Translator," although she had stoutly withstood the charm of Pückler's personality as reflected in the *Letters from a Dead Man*. She was disgusted by the more daring passages and modified or cut them unscrupulously, whereat he cried out in humorous anger:

Really, Signora, your womanly fear to offend one or the other insignificant person, and still more the consciousness of your sex being known to the public, makes you such a little coward that you are taking away almost every "sel" of my books. But a translator ought to be of no sex at all.²

To which she retorted with conscious virtue:

In the first place you are to know . . . that the general outcry of rage, scorn and disgust at you is such, that it has been extremely painful to encounter even as it is. . . . One of the proprietors of the Times said to me long ago—of the other Volumes—"It was you who saved the book. But for your judgment the shameful treachery and personality would have damned it" . . . those passages which

¹ Janet Ross, *Three Generations of Englishwomen*, London, 1888, i., pp. 35 and 37.

² Unpublished; rough draft of a letter from Pückler to Sara Austin; undated.

you are pleased to call the "sel" . . . I take leave to call the dirt of your book.¹

No, the book was not to blame; it was his letters to her which conquered that feminine heart. She tried at first to keep him at arm's-length, but Pückler was irrepressible. Somehow the "dear Translator of the Dead" had fired his imagination; he began to dream of her at nights, and to describe these experiences with his customary frankness:

DEAREST SARA,—You'll get into a terrible passion with me, but I can't help it. Last night I had a dream of You, dear Sara, a rapturous dream—oh it was life itself! . . . I pressed a lovely form in delirious madness to my heart, and thought to feel her burning kisses on my thirsty lips. . . . I must have the privilege of thinking aloud with you, or no more write at all. You won't—very well. You shall be satisfied, and instantly I will entirely forget the lovely woman, the dear unknown, and speak only to my translator, with whom it is now my turn to be excessively angry.²

But the lovely woman had no wish to be entirely forgotten. Rather than that she undertook the responsibilities of his "petite femme par distance," and they were soon on epistolary terms which would certainly have horrified those numerous friends who thought her the very pink of propriety. Temperament will out. Sally Taylor had been a reckless flirt; Mrs Austin was too modest to transcribe Pückler's glowing description of the *Judith* at

¹ Unpublished; letter from Sara Austin to Pückler; dated March 11 (probably 1832).

² Unpublished; rough draft of a letter from Pückler to Sara Austin; undated.



SARA AUSTIN.

Blandford Park, but she did not scruple to give him a detailed catalogue of her own physical charms. In short, her surrender was singularly complete, although she knew many qualms; and when unsuspecting friends who had heard of the correspondence began to uplift warning voices to the tune, "Again I say take care what you write," Mrs Austin experienced all the flustering symptoms of sensibility in distress:

Therefore, Hermann, know fully and distinctly that my life is . . . in your hands . . . and that an indiscretion on your part—the vanity of shewing a letter—of quoting a fond sentence, might as effectually kill me, as if you poured down my throat the poison I should swallow. I know you only from report. . . . I must be mad or stupid not to see the risks I run, nor could you, as a man of sense, be flattered by such blindfold, insane security. Nevertheless I love you so dearly, and my nature is so frank and confiding that I shall invent no pretexts to back out of my dangerous position. . . . If you can trust yourself with the sacred deposit of the lives and happiness of three persons—each of no common value—then I will trust you. But in the name of God, Hermann—as you are a man and a gentleman—if you doubt your discretion, your self-command, your earnest sense of the solemnity of what I say to you—in the name of God—be frank and candid and save me, save us all from peril.—Imagine me on my knees before you and with streaming eyes.¹

Hermann answered this tempestuous appeal in the matter-of-fact language of one who knows his

¹ Unpublished; letter from Sara Austin to Pückler; undated.

own strength; and indeed this curious *liaison* was never suspected by their mutual friends; Pückler was no blabber, and Sara was circumspect.

Before the end of 1834 virtue had prevailed. After a nervous breakdown, dramatically described, Mrs Austin began to be on better terms with her husband, whose health needed her nursing and care; she had always adored her little daughter; she now decided to devote herself henceforth entirely to Mr Austin and her child:

Do not think me either fickle or hypocritical and prudish if I tell you to lower your expectations of what I *may* and *can* be to you. Were I free I still think I could be everything to you . . . let us not deceive ourselves—there is an object between us.¹

For some time after this her letters were extremely plaintive, but she did not falter: "I may be worn out; but I shall have done my duty," was her mournful cry; happily her nobility was rewarded. Her husband obtained a good post in Valetta in 1836, and Sara accompanied him abroad. New scenes and interests made it easier to banish the agitating figure of the foreigner from her temperamental breast.

Pückler turned back to the lighter world of lovely ladies whose duty it is to charm. The soulful Sabine Heinefetter, an adorable little actress; Louise von Kottwitz, "un joli mouton blond," and no better than she should be; Wilhelmine von Zielinski, who had a very pretty wit; Sophie Gay, with her graceful

¹ Unpublished; letter from Sara Austin to Pückler; dated December 2, 1834.

and affectionate letters—all these delightful creatures were ready at any moment to dance to his piping and dissipate gloom; heading them all Bettina von Arnim, performing her famous Mignon pirouettes.

Bettina was now sixty years old, but completely devoid of sense. Romantic poets rarely learn the secrets of maturity and age; those whom their own strange gods prefer, die young. Bettina, preparing to launch on an unappreciative world the letters she said she had written to Goethe twenty-five years ago, was still harping on a string which no longer sounded in tune. She must have been enchanting when she was young; and there is truth enough in her much-decried book to show that her feeling for Goethe had been the great adventure of her life; but, being intellectually imaginative, emotionally excitable and spiritually vain, she could not rest satisfied with this. Not only did she entertain her friends in season and out of season with the tale of her romantic adoration for the poet; not only did she read the letters involved to all comers whether they wished to hear them or not; she also cultivated throughout her life a passion for eminent men. Varnhagen drew up a list of more than twenty names comprising the distinguished men with whom she had fancied herself in love at one time or another; it included Goethe, Beethoven, Liszt, Lewis of Bavaria, Frederick William IV., Humboldt, Schleiermacher and Pückler-Muskau. Goethe was not the only one of these who found it necessary to keep the impetuous worshipper at arm's-length; but perhaps none of her idols treated her quite so severely as

the Prince. Bettina adopted the *technique* she had first employed with Goethe, and which had now become mechanical. She pursued him with declarations and surrounded him with incense; she was passionate and soulful turn by turn, but never for a moment did she descend to the earth; she was always up in the clouds. He met her with more than his usual eccentric frankness: he did not deny his admiration for her gifts; he regretted openly that she was no longer a girl of sixteen—he even spoke rather early in the correspondence of a mingling of souls in an eternal kiss—but he also teased her unmercifully, snubbed her brutally, called her his slave, rejected her love; and when she spoke of passion he answered, with cutting truth, that what she felt for him was mere moonshine madness, an artificially heightened sensuality of the brain. But he made the fatal mistake of boasting that those who had seen Muskau had seen into his heart. Bettina accepted the invitation. Pückler heard that she was coming and implored Lucie to keep her away, for God's sake! or he would murder her. It was too late; Bettina was already wandering romantically in the park, waiting to be recognised and welcomed within. Once indoors, she carried on as if they were declared lovers, which made him look terribly ridiculous, he complained to Varnhagen, for was she not incredibly old? It reached such a pitch that he could stand no more, and gave her a hint to be gone. She took her departure with fantastic dignity, and he repented and was moved. He wrote, begging her not to make him conspicuous, and

assuring her that he would always be glad to hear from her, if she had anything sympathetic and sensible to say. She thereupon retired in good order to her second line of defence, and embarked on a most impressive and lofty communion of kindred souls. She asked Varnhagen to contradict the rumour that she was going to marry the Prince (a piece of news, as that diplomat cannily said, which no one had mentioned but herself) and turned her attention to the spiritual needs of a worldling who was three parts rake. She revealed, with much solemnity, the true inwardness of prayer; she analysed the spirit of Christianity; she conceived the burlesque idea of bringing Pückler and Schleiermacher together. This last-named emotional affinity was a gentle and pious theologian, who entered with simple eagerness into the conspiracy to convert Pückler to Christianity through Bettina, handmaiden of the Lord. The presumptive convert jested about all this religious zeal to Varnhagen in a deplorably flippant manner; but he responded sympathetically, and even warmly, to Bettina herself, for he was much given to religious musings, and her elaborate rhapsodies, although they do not ring quite true, contain some interesting thoughts. He was touched by her views on prayer, and lagged not at all behind her in his appreciation of Christ. But when Schleiermacher came to die, his taste was offended by the death-bed rites, which Bettina faithfully reported in great detail with a characteristic lack of humour. He also felt sincere sorrow for the real grief of the extravagant little mourner who had flung herself into widow's weeds,

and a retrospective bad conscience at having played at conversion now^{er} that the death of the priest had thrown so *macabre* a shadow^{had} over his Mephistophelian game. Bettina and Schleiermacher would have been his godparents, he reflected sardonically; and after the baptism a wedding no doubt? But he would have laughed and told them: "You must first catch your hare."

The literary outcome of this strange friendship was the dedication to Pückler-Muskau of *Goethe's Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde*. He accepted it in a cavalier fashion, being none too well pleased at the public coupling of their names; but she had paid him the greatest compliment in her power, and a tribute of no mean worth. Her feelings for Pückler may have been merely the outcome of a heated fancy; his name still stands on the first page of a book redolent of the spirit of poetry and the fragile grace of youth.

Pückler contended that Bettina had every talent but that she lacked charm. It is the Nemesis of those who conceive themselves to be charming that they are always forcing the note. The trouble with Bettina went even deeper. She was one of the cerebral sensationists who lack temperament, but admire it intellectually, and strive to convince themselves and others that this quality is theirs in a marked degree. Much more royalist than the king, they adopt exalted and impassioned airs, undergoing at the slightest provocation spiritual raptures and emotional torments which they imagine rather than feel. The rank and file may be deceived by these manifestations, those



BETTINA VON ARNIM AS A CHILD.



BETTINA VON ARNIM IN OLD AGE.

of the blood royal are not : there lies a chastity in real temperament which shrinks from the shameless antics of the fake. Pückler was often cruel and insolent in his dealings with this artful old humbug of sixty, spinning round in ceaseless circles to intoxicate herself and bewilder her audience. There was a real Bettina imprisoned inside the fake whose qualities he recognised, and who appears sporadically but with great effect in their correspondence, considerably modifying the general impression that truth and reality are to be found in Pückler's letters and mystical falsehood in hers. She drew a fairy-tale picture of the Prince in his enchanted castle which positively haunts the mind with its grotesque and revealing touches and its uncanny refrain : "Your heart lies spellbound in this magic park . . . slumbering, sunk in dreams, enchanted prince." The little old witch who had been turned out of doors had seen into his heart before she went.

It was his strange, wild, questioning spirit which made him cross the seas in search of unknown worlds. But he took his temperament with him, and ladies adored him in Algiers, Tunis and Greece as they had loved him in Germany, Italy, England and France. He was seriously in love himself in Tunis with a married woman, who succumbed to him completely ; but he was a friend of her husband's, and this particular version of the " eternal triangle " plagued and distressed him. He was madly in love again in Athens with Irene von Prokesch-Osten, in precisely similar circumstances, and felt real remorse and unhappiness, and tragic, mysterious regrets. These novel sensations

resulted in a violent reaction against the European conception of love. It was time to have done with Western women and institutions if they caused these gnashings of the teeth over the sweetest pleasure of life. Pückler threw off his hang-dog airs, and determined to behave like a sensible Turk. He rode into the slave-market at Cairo, purchased two charming young Abyssinians and transported them on to his bark. He was thoroughly happy with his harem, free from tormenting relationships, sensually and spiritually at rest as long as he remained in the East. The country and the mode of life suited his temperament exactly, transforming his restlessness into serenity and calming his stormy nerves.

During the first dreary years after his return he gradually adapted himself to the old conditions, a process much encouraged by some amusing and interesting women, who darted like swallows in and out of his thoughts. There was Metternich's wife, Mélanie, who made much of him in Vienna—a tender coquette, who, however, weakened her influence by playing an elaborate practical joke on the Prince on April 1, 1840; it was some time before he could conquer his chagrin and mortification, but he forgave her in the end. Helmine, a changed, irritable and inimical Helmine, appeared at Muskau only to wound and aggravate him; but her daughter Lucie came with her, a creature at least as odd as the mother and with much of her vanished charm. Pückler turned to this novelty as a flower towards the sun. An intimate relationship grew up between them, which lasted from 1841-1847, and which was later to cause

him trouble ; but at the beginning at least it refreshed him, distracted him and kept him alert.

It was not enough : avidly he continued his search for an interest to deaden his nostalgia for the East. The spirits ironic sent him the Countess Ida Hahn-Hahn, a minor novelist of noble birth, who took herself with that incredible seriousness which seems the enviable monopoly of scribblers and other dabblers in the arts. Pückler read her latest novel, *Sigismund Förster*, in a dreary inn at Warmbrunn in September 1844, and wrote to lay a heartfelt tribute of admiration at her feet. It was preceded by the candid confession that her other books had struck him as affected, precious and unnatural. He had liked her rather better than her novels, he added carelessly, when he had made her acquaintance a few years earlier ; but, prejudiced as he then was, and absorbed by other interests, he had received but a slight impression. It availed him little that he now revised his former opinion, likened her to George Sand and craved her pardon for having misjudged her. The keynote of their correspondence was set. Ida clearly could not forgive him for having dared to dislike her books and to flout her personality. She represented herself as laughing heartily when she received his letter (one thinks to hear the hollowest of "ha ha's!"). If *he* had remained cool when he saw her, *she* had noted in her diary that he was nothing but an actor, and that she had no heart for him. The poetess was on the warpath. If Pückler owned that writing bored and wearied him, she gave him to understand that the blighting effect of this lamentable attitude was plainly

apparent in his works ; for her part she wrote with flying pen and pounding heart, for *she* (by implication) was a genius, and *he* a dilettante. If he spoke warmly of Lady Hester Stanhope, she extolled the prophets of the Old Testament and curled her lips over the Englishwoman's retail trade of revelations, predestined horses and the like, asking him sombrely if a spirit striving towards truth could ever debase itself to such trickery. If he tried to make himself interesting by saying that he loved madmen, she cried out against him in horror, and demanded rhetorically whether he were an alienist, or were founding an asylum, that he should talk in such a manner. If he hazarded a poetical theory on personal immortality, she crushed him with a lofty and mystical vision of merging and melting into the Ocean of Life, well calculated to make his feeble hopes of survival seem paltry and egotistical. She was a rock of strength and true to the innermost depths of her being ; he was as unstable as water and as shifting as the sand. She was a volcano of scorching passions ; he had no temperament, and a cold and empty heart. She was the stormy deep ; he the superficial and sparkling shallow who could never comprehend or answer her call.

He bore it all philosophically, as well he might. He always enjoyed playing Byron, and she positively forced the part on him. Also, in spite of her vainglory, it was evident that he interested her vitally and that she could not leave him alone. He meanwhile seemed so admirably humble that she gradually diminished in severity and increased in warmth. He was promoted from the sparkling shallows to the rank of a

tragic and devastating comet shooting through space, whilst the Countess Ida, a tiny fixed star, watched him with pitiful and tender eyes. She even began to talk of laying a cool hand on his fevered brow, a hand which, paradoxically enough, was warm with life and throbbing with passion. Rather plaintively too she touched on the possibility that he, who could take nothing seriously, might even be playing with *her*. The delighted Pückler had her where he wanted her at last when she lamented the something disilluioning about him which caused her to see blossoms falling wherever his hand might stray. Never had human words made a deeper and more painful impression on him, he assured her; he had wept over the passage. So startling a phenomenon as the disilluioning hand certainly demanded some research into its origins. Pückler was ready with a thesis. In the most moving style at his command he sketched his unhappy childhood, then turned to her for comfort :

That poor child now lays his head in your lap with a last youthful impulse, weeping over his wasted life. Grant him this favour occasionally; he asks for nothing more.¹

Both the woman and the authoress were thrilled—too much thrilled in fact, for Ida did not give herself time to read this important missive properly before sending back winged words, in which her triumph at having hooked her fish was certainly more obvious than her skill in playing him. She made two serious blunders: she read “tristeren” for “tieferen,” and

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, i., p. 331; letter from Pückler to Ida Hahn-Hahn; dated from Muskau, March 16, 1845.

unhappily quoted the phrase in which this word occurred; she also visualised Pückler leaning his tired head and desolate heart against her shoulder—a pitiable howler and an uncomfortable position to boot:

I never said that I leant my head against your shoulder as if it were a tree, but in your lap, *et je vous prie de croire que j'en connais la différence*. Such prudishness is really hardly worthy of you.¹

So much for the woman; the novelist received an even sharper rap over the knuckles on the subject of “tristeren”:

I must warn you that I am very sensitive on the subject of vulgarity, and if I had used such an expression, fit only for a Berlin corner-boy, I should feel as if I had touched pitch with clean hands. But I wrote “deeper” and I am very much offended that you should ascribe such ignoble expressions to me.²

Pückler forgave Ida during the course of this letter, but one can hardly believe that she ever pardoned him. The affected amusement in her last short note cannot disguise the rage in which it was written; and indeed her monstrous conceit had suffered a cruel blow. A few days later chance brought them together in the same hotel in Dresden, but not face to face. To his petition for a *tête-à-tête* with lowered blinds, she responded by sending a card marked with her reception hours. He nonchalantly refused to avail himself of this opportunity. It did not seem to occur to him

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, i., p. 334; letter from Pückler to Ida Hahn-Hahn, March 22, 1845; dated from Muskau.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 335-336, March 23, 1845.

that apologies were due. He may sometimes have intruded on her thoughts during her noisy and theatrical devotions in the convent she founded at Mayence, for she became a Roman Catholic in 1850 and a free-lance nun a few years later, who was by no means immured from the world. She had previously delineated Pückler to the best of her ability in *Sybille*, in 1846. Her novels of high life and love were abandoned after 1850 in favour of ultramontane propaganda equally turgid in style.

The vanity of both Prince and poetess had been severely stung before the end, but his wound did not irritate him for long; he was shortly to forget such trifles in the raptures and despairs of a last great wave of passion. The Countess de la Rochefoucauld, the Rosa of his diary and of his letters to Lucie, was perhaps the most charming and certainly the most loving of all the pageantry of fair women these pages have evoked. Half French, half German, with connections amongst the great all over Europe, she had the true cosmopolitan flavour, and great dark eyes whose indescribable expression caused Pückler's senses to swoon. She was young, exquisitely pretty, gay, witty, tender, and as naturally caressing as a kitten. Her letters, written in an artless mixture of correct French and ungrammatical German, can boast of few commas and are often blotted with her tears. They reveal a clinging, yielding nature, made to be adored. She called Pückler "Du süßes Du"; she copied out verses from Byron; she would have no presents, but begged for a lock of his hair; she confessed to frantic jealousy, and yet would not willingly

deprive him of a single pleasure ; but she would fain have kept his fiery, soulful eyes hidden in her breast, that their rays might fall on no other woman or meet other eyes than her own. Pückler found it hard to believe that he could still inspire such a passion in his sixtieth year ; but the older he grew the greater his power over women, as others testified at this time, and his own volcanic emotions were very far from extinct. They met in Thuringia in 1845, and their mutual attraction was such that Pückler had soon nothing left to wish for except complete and undisturbed possession of his beloved. But she had married the French ambassador at Weimar two years ago, and her husband, who was no Apollo, was as suspicious as was natural in the circumstances, and as jealous as he had shortly every reason to be. He was completely deceived, but even this did not procure Pückler the satisfaction which he craved. For the third time in his life he would have given all his possessions to marry the woman he loved. In one letter after another he poured out his mingled bliss and misery to Lucie : the glory of loving and being loved ; the intolerable burden of restraint ; the torment of stolen meetings. Rosa would not consent to leave her husband on account of her child and her social position. Rather than that she braved the dangers of discovery. Three or four nights a week Pückler would let himself into her house with a duplicate key, creep noiselessly up the stairs, and steal down at five in the morning, a tall, slender, slightly stooping shadow, wrapped in a long black cloak. It was thus that he spent the night of his sixtieth birthday, “une entreprise de jeune

homme entourée de dangers et de difficultés.”¹ Both the lovers felt a strong distaste for the furtive element which surrounded their romance. He, generally so careless in such matters, rebelled for once against the stock-in-trade of intrigue; and she, torn between love and fear, hated it as a symbol of guilt.

Servants were beginning to threaten disclosure; there was also some misunderstanding over a sum of money which he gave her to silence them. The relationship became sensibly cooler, although they remained the most romantic friends. Rosa admitted the attentions of another admirer, but she assured Pückler that no one would ever have the power to banish his fiery spirit from her heart; there was no one like him in the world, and her feeling for him was unquenchable and unique. She was not a light woman, and her relations with Pückler’s successor probably were, and remained, as Platonic as she described them, for she was seeking a hard-won serenity in the duties of a mother and wife. She died in 1847, possibly in childbirth; but her confidential woman told Pückler, in 1851, that she had been so desperately unhappy that she had done everything to hasten her end. The separation from Pückler had broken her heart, it seemed; in vain had she encouraged Platonic friendships; she could not live without love.

He mourned her after the manner of old men, with restraint and apparent resignation, but with a shaken heart. He dared not go near her house in 1848; he was shattered when he saw it in 1850; his

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, ix., p. 181; diary of October 30, 1845.

spirit was still crying out for her in 1851. She remained until his death the most beautiful memory of his life; he was always praising her to other women. She plays the chief part in his confessions to Ludmilla Assing, as the one perfect lover he had ever known; he believed that his letters to her, which had been destroyed in a moment of panic, were the most poetical and passionate he had written. But not even Rosa was able to reform this rake. He taught her the meaning of his cabbalistic signs, and was paying court to at least two other women during his affair with her. He wrote her a letter of advice on the subject of her new lover which somehow escaped the general *autodafé*; the particulars he gave here about his favourite sister, the startling candour of his language, mingled with so much affection and good will, all complete the picture of a lawless libertine to whom no pleasures came amiss.

The crop of lighter dalliyings which flourished during the years 1846-1854 were numerous and passing, and most of them purely playful. A Röschen, a gallant widow, two mysterious Hungarians, who proved to be of the *demi-monde* and dreadfully expensive, Edwina Viereck the actress, and others of her ilk, wove their way in and out of the maze reserved for his trifling moods. But he also became involved in intrigues of another kind, a series of shady and rather unsavoury affairs. He reproached himself in 1846 with the "real sin" of forcing himself to embrace a woman without desire. Perhaps it was this which broke his luck, for his lesser affairs generally ran their course with the lightness and gaiety which such ex-

treme promiscuity as his demands if it is to remain æsthetically innocuous. Early in 1847 he was thrown into a state of great agitation at his betrayal and deception by a young girl in the most cruelly refined manner and in circumstances which he piteously designated as shameless. He now, he said, clearly understood what remorse meant; before this he had only seen it through a glass darkly. Lucie von Blücher was also giving him many an uncomfortable moment. She was attempting to father him with a son begotten under much pressure by one of his servants, and was threatening him with marriage or exposure, goaded thereto, she impudently declared, when Pückler accused her of this imposture, by an overwhelming love. The effort to marry her off to Caïd Osman, the Jäger of earlier days, who had become somewhat of a figure in the East, proved abortive; but she was brought to see reason at last. The same kind of situation recurred in 1852 with Marie von Hochstedt, who lost the remnants of her virtue to Pückler at Branitz and then began to blackmail. She was a born adventuress, who amused herself by posing publicly as his illegitimate daughter whilst she secretly extorted money for his love-letters. He had half promised to travel East with this "adder," to whom he had been genuinely attached, and was therefore considerably disillusioned and disconcerted, for such things had never happened to him before. This affair also was hushed up, and the erring damsel coaxed and bullied into decent behaviour. The difficulty with women was not to get hold of them, concluded this distraught Don Juan, but to get rid of them; there lay the rub.

After Lucie's death Pückler walked warily for a time, and refused to entertain the idea of a lifelong union with Bertha von Meerveldt after a trial week at Branitz. She had been brought up by an unscrupulous mother to the trade of a courtesan, and had then been married to a vicious husband, who had cruelly deserted her. She was now desperately seeking shelter and comparative respectability. Pückler's chief grievance against her was that she was not nearly temperamental enough to make a good mistress, and far too lazy to learn. He gave her plenty of sound advice on the subject, according to his lights, but somehow it would not do. He got it so much on his mind that she was merely shamming ecstasy in his arms, protest she never so eloquently to the contrary, that he completely lost heart, and turned his attention to training her as an actress instead. She was incredibly careless about money, feckless and heedless in all her ways, and full of ill-timed levity; but she was entirely free from guile, an excellent creature at heart, and gifted with unflinching courage in the face of adversity. Bertha's reputation was too flamboyant for Vienna; even Pückler's influence with Laube could not introduce her into the Hofburg Theatre, but he managed to establish her in Weimar, where she infuriated him by flaunting about the streets in his carriage during a visit from the Berlin Court. He had expressly forbidden her to do this, and the royal sovereigns took it much amiss. He defended her publicly, but she had merited his displeasure and the strictures he had passed on her a few months before:

You are thoughtless, as incorrigibly thoughtless as a tree-frog, clumsy as a carp on dry land and as disobedient into the bargain as *Hardi*.¹

Bertha drifted to Leipzig from Weimar, and committed suicide in 1860 when she discovered that she was dying of cancer. She wrote Pückler a long letter on the day of her death, asking him for some last assistance, which he rendered, as she had known he would. He defended her action to his old friend, Apollonius von Maltitz, and objected strongly to the epithet "depraved." He had known hundreds of respected and highly esteemed ladies, he declared, who, if reports were true, would fare much worse on the Day of Judgment than poor unhappy Bertha, who would have been acclaimed on all sides for her amiable and generous nature if she had had £50,000 a year.

The older Pückler grew the more he felt the need of young companionship. Amused and touched by the apparently ingenuous letters of a little step-niece, Ida von Seydewitz, the daughter of his half-brother, Max, he invited her to come to Branitz for an indefinite time. Her father was only too glad to consent. He delivered this plausible maiden of eighteen at the castle himself, and left her enterprising uncle to the mercies of an attractive little *rouée*, who was also a shocking shrew. She was obstreperous, ignorant and badly brought up. She teased him, cajoled him, annoyed him, enraged him and made him laugh

¹ Unpublished; letter from Pückler to Bertha Meerveldt; dated from Branitz, February 28, 1858. *Hardi* was her little canary, which she had left in Branitz, and which Pückler loved very much.

until he cried, all in one breath. She treated him to the most outrageous scenes, and even threatened to poison him. She never gave him a moment's peace, and was such a little devil, especially in the mornings, that he called her Satanella :

And why do I love her all the same? Because she is just like a teasing, fascinating little animal, completely naïve, as transparent as glass in spite of all her innate feminine arts and wiles, and therefore as divinely true as only animals are. . . .¹

He tried to educate her : he placed her for some time in a *pension* in Lausanne ; he travelled with her to improve her mind ; he was even ready to marry her at one time ; but her violence alienated him in the end. He made a will in her favour, which he destroyed when she provided for herself by marrying in 1863. He was almost sorry to have let her go when she came to see him with her husband, for this demon incarnate was as fresh as the morning and as beautiful as the rose. Needless to say she had been his mistress, for no woman ever went intact out of his den, as he once half boasted to Lucie. But in the midst of the hectic excitement of their questionable companionship he found time to make a note in his diary of the first time Satanella had seen the sea. Her perfidy in conducting a secret correspondence with him under another name, in which she mercilessly befooled this eternally romantic Don Juan, destroyed her influence with him for good. He had entered on this relationship, he now saw, swayed by that fantastic imagination which had so often run away with his common sense,

¹ Unpublished ; diary of October 1-3, 1860.

and which had led him in this case to perpetrate one of the greatest of all the great follies of his badly governed life.

This disillusionment did not prevent him from falling in love again and yet again. When he was eighty years of age he protected and adored a Hungarian singer, Sarolta de Bujanovics, the niece of an old flame—a complete child of nature, this one, who loved him dearly in her babyish way. Pückler was often jealous, and told her more than once that she was after his money; for it appeared incredible that she should have loved him for himself at that age. But it seems that, though she sometimes wheedled money from him, he had conquered her infant heart by other means:

Maintenant que l'explication est donnée, je compte recevoir vit, vit, vit une lettre de toi, aussi charmante et délicieuse comme toi seul les sait écrire, sans me donner du *vous*, sans cela je recommence à te dire mon Prince et à te détester, seulement j'ai une peur affreuse que cela me sera complètement impossible, et quoique tu fasses et dise, je ne pourrai que t'aimer de tout mon cœur, et finirai par t'adorer! Ha ça mon Prince, savez-vous que c'est très mal et surtout très défendu d'ensorceller les jeunes filles? et je vois que vous me dominez d'une façon toute particulière . . . un milion de baisers, et tendres caresses, et aime toujours ta Sarolta.¹

He loved her for about a year, for it was probably the most serious of the innumerable adventures of his advanced old age. His temperament, always a queer

¹ Unpublished; letter from Sarolta de Bujanovics to Pückler; dated from Paris, October 29, 1866. I have retained the mistakes.

one, became positively uncanny during the last years of his life. The *Mystères de Branitz*, as Ludmilla Assing calls them, put her in mind of a witches' sabbath alternating with fairy-tale scenes: Hecate, Lola, Bacchus, Bonnet-Rouge, Little Lizard and Lady Harp—fantastic names, and fantastic shapes, dancing at Branitz Hall; trains of pages and slave-girls, *gamins* and *gamines* by the score; and in their midst a wicked old wizard with beautiful sapphire eyes. This is the legend his biographer recounts, and she had every reason to know.

He was still romantic enough in 1868 to rush into correspondence with that much-loved novelist of the German middle class, Eugenie John, who wrote under the pseudonym of Marlitt. She was then forty-three years of age, rather deaf and no beauty, but very happy in her modest domestic circle. Pückler succeeded in discovering her real name and address, but she steadfastly refused his invitations to Branitz and his proposals that he should visit her. She was strongly entrenched behind the prickly hedge of middle-class pride. She suspected irony in his flattery; she examined his confidences and advances rather suspiciously; she took offence readily and returned it with interest; she showed *pique* where none was called for, and then passed it off as a joke. In fact she was quite impregnable, and left his last pathetic letter unanswered, although it was written from a bed of sickness. Those who have read *Goldelse* and *Das Geheimniss der alten Mamsell* in the schoolroom will certainly agree that the pearl of this correspondence lies in the letter in which Pückler

compares Marlitt to Shakespeare, if they still chance to remember the quality of the sentiment which drips from these books. His otherwise reliable judgment could be swayed by the least breath of romance miles from its true course. Marlitt was a woman, and Marlitt was unknown.

The friendship which she finally refused him was his in full measure from Ludmilla Assing, niece of his old friend and literary protector, Varnhagen von Ense. Their acquaintance had begun during the latter's lifetime, and continued when the niece became her uncle's literary executor. She published many of his papers and was herself a writer of some distinction. Pückler and Ludmilla were on terms of the warmest intimacy from 1860 until his death. She was much away in Italy, and their correspondence was practically unbroken for ten years. His published letters bear witness to a pleasant mixture of intellectual admiration, friendly interest, a protective and almost avuncular regard. Her unpublished answers show her completely bedazzled and fathoms deep in love :

My whole being melts away in the beauty and glory of yours. . . . My heart is burning to ashes. . . . I still see you before me, beautiful and radiant as a fairy-tale king. . . . I love you in sorrow and in joy with all the powers of my soul. . . . Your appearance here in Berlin was like some lovely meteor; you are the same magician as ever, out-distancing human dreams. Even I have never seen you look more beautiful, younger, fresher, more dazzling, more bewildering. . . . Would that I could dissolve myself into flower petals and strew myself thus at your feet. . . . I shall always love

you, you float before my imagination in the soft but fiery light of your beauty and spirit. You are a miracle, an exception . . . you change as little as the eternal stars. You are a magician, and your magic becomes daily more dangerous. . . . I should like to enfold you like a creeping plant, and in this most intimate embrace ask you for all your secrets.¹

It would have needed stronger nerves than Pückler possessed to resist the relaxing effect of such floods of adulation. He probably gave up the unequal struggle when she visited him at Branitz in 1867, for he told her in 1870 that he still loved her fiercely. The ruling passion was strong in death. He dictated a letter to Billy on February 14, 1870, which she was perhaps not as much surprised to receive as one might expect. It was one of those strange epistles in which passion, sensuality and weirdly indecent proposals combined, it would seem, to produce a hypnotic effect on the recipients. Otherwise this and other letters would certainly have been destroyed. Since he instructed her to address her answer again under cover to his chief forester, well sealed, it looks as if Ludmilla Assing, like so many others, had obeyed his necromantic instructions before. She printed the last letter of all containing the wistful declaration of an old man's love and a rakish assignation to meet him in heaven ; but she omitted the all too earthly prayers which are there in the original, traced in the shaking handwriting of a stricken man, who had only a month to live.

Ludmilla had formed the wish to write Pückler's

¹ Selected from various of the unpublished letters of Ludmilla Assing to Pückler. Although she died insane in 1880, these letters show no other signs of an unsound mind.



LUDMILLA ASSING.

life early in their intercourse. She told him that he would never find a better biographer, for she could not believe that anyone else could equal her in love and understanding; a true sketch of his life and character would bring the world to his feet, she added, with an insight which was in itself the sweetest flattery. He was caught by the phrase "true sketch." He had collected and arranged his enormous correspondence with this very end in view, keeping rough drafts or copies of his own slightest notes; for he cherished a strong desire that posterity might one day know him as he really was, a psychological study which he felt to be unique. But he hesitated for some time, for Ludmilla struck him as too inexperienced to understand him completely, and also as a "little phrase-maker" who was quite capable of being shocked. He wrote the beginning of a long confession, which he kept by him for a month, whilst she begged and implored him to gladden her with the sight of this precious document. It is far less outspoken and written in a much more orthodox way than the confidences which he had been wont to make to Lucie, and with which he had also regaled Sara Austin, Rosa and Bertha. He had read his Ludmilla aright, for she exhibited the ugly mannerisms of the prude when she received it at last. He drew back immediately, interrupted his writing, and never resumed this analysis of his sexual life, although she repented in sackcloth and ashes. In vain did she beseech him to continue communications which had thrilled her to the depths of her being, she moaned, awakening sensations hitherto unknown, wild and terrible, intoxicating and sweet. This alone would

stamp her as one of the great puritan confraternity, who always see much further in such matters than the text warrants ; for Pückler's confidences consisted almost entirely of descriptions of Rosa which would not have dishonoured the pen of that innocuous contributor to the *Gartenlaube*, the Shakespeare of Germany, Eugenie John. The impetus to compose his reminiscences did not return ; but he forgave his future biographer, promised to leave her all his papers in his will, and even allowed her to read the more exciting correspondences after her visit to Branitz. She had learned her lesson by now, and expressed her natural feelings of horror in a most flattering manner :

I am still under the impression of these strange and unheard-of horrors. I should never have dreamt that such things could be. What dæmonic depths and abysses there are in you, my dearest prince ! But you could wander through the whole of hell and your lofty goodness of heart, your radiant spirit, your poetical mind, your feeling for beauty would never desert you ; and so it befell that I went on loving you, sometimes *quoique*, sometimes *parce que* in all your deformations. But in spite of the greatest pains I could not conquer a most violent aversion for your lovely niece.¹

These letters, which she devoured with "a beating heart, with pleasure and fear, with love and terror," never blessed her eyesight again. Pückler omitted to mention her in his last will. The sole legatee, Frau von Pachelbl-Gehag, her father and a family friend rushed down to Branitz before the breath was well out of Pückler's body, seized his papers, destroyed

¹ Unpublished ; letter from Ludmilla Assing to Pückler ; dated from Berlin, June 23, 1867.

all those in the "secret box," and sent others back to the writers; and, obeying in this Pückler's last wish, burned all Lucie's letters from 1817-1834 unread and strewed the ashes on his grave. When Ludmilla heard what had happened—through Billy, who had vainly tried to hinder it—she was distracted. All hope seemed lost, for her piteous appeals for the rest of the correspondence remained unanswered. She became a blackmailer by necessity. There had been the most hair-raising scandals in the Seydewitz letters, which compromised not only Pückler's three nieces, but persons in all the "all-highest" circles themselves. Ludmilla had an excellent memory. She threatened to publish these stories unless she were allowed temporary possession at least of what was morally, if not legally, her own. She had Pückler's written promise to leave her his papers, of which she was also prepared to make use. Needless to say she won her point; in fact the collapse of the Seydewitz party was so complete that they made over the whole collection as a gift. She was thus in a position to leave these remarkable documents to the Royal Library¹ in Berlin when she died.

In spite of her inside knowledge it is a disappointing *Life*, for all that it was certainly written with the heart as well as the pen. Fragmentary, disjointed, carelessly composed, flowery and conventional in style, it contains some striking and pleasing passages, but does not capture the imagination as it should. Pückler's personality is toned down, many of his adventures are hushed up. The shadow of puritanism

¹ Now the State Library.

is over the book ; she dared not tell the whole truth, sometimes she wilfully misrepresented it. It was all in the name of love, so that presumably she will be forgiven. But such tolerance cannot extend to her edition of nine volumes of Pückler's letters and diaries. It must be granted that she has picked out most of the plums from this colossal mass of material, but they are presented in an order which has neither rhyme nor reason, chronology nor logic to justify it, and contain misreadings and misprints without number. She suppressed all Pückler's letters to his wife from 1835 onwards, and the few which appear here and there in her *Life* throw little light on their later relationship. She gave only one or two specimens of Lucie's letters, which are extant from 1834 until her death. Nor has she published even this truncated correspondence completely. Pückler's earliest letters are omitted ; arbitrary extracts are given from his letters from England, excluding a great deal of the utmost interest which was not published in the *Letters from a Dead Man*. Over and above all this, she censored nearly every letter without a single warning asterisk. She adopted the same methods for the general correspondence. She printed one or two letters to Bertha von Meerveldt, for instance, which are completely misleading as they stand. More of a woman than an editor, she cravenly omitted all her own outpourings. Sara Austin, Sarolta and many others were modestly ignored. But since she could obviously not publish the whole enormous collection, she had the right to pick and choose. Where her editorial conscience was most glaringly at fault was in her persistent mangling

of the text, which she had not even the honesty to acknowledge. This has a strong Victorian tendency behind it. She was bound perhaps to leave out many indiscreet and injurious references to contemporaries; she was also justified in drawing the line at some indecent passages, although the twentieth century will not see eye to eye with Ludmilla Assing as to what is frankly unpublishable and what is not. But she suppressed many inoffensive revelations lest they should throw an unbecoming light on her hero: treachery all the more rank because he had relied on her to publish the truth. She omitted some of his more liberal opinions, the publication of which could harm no one but herself; she shortened the accounts of his health; and now in the full tide of editorship she began to cut out anything that seemed to her irrelevant or dull. It speaks well for Pückler's vitality that, with all the high lights and hardly any shade, emptied of much of the content, and distorted as to form, his letters still appear so real and so lively in these volumes. But it is only by repairing to the State Library in Berlin that one can know him as he really was—one of the greatest of impenitent rakes, bowdlerised by a prude.

* * *

The story of Pückler-Muskau and women is not calculated to stand the test of Podsnappery, for it would certainly "bring a blush into the cheek of the young person," and might even colour more hardened cheeks if it were unfolded in all its details. Few men, one supposes, can have equalled him in exuberance. Ludmilla Assing calculated, not without horror, that

the loves of Don Juan and Jupiter added together would still fall short of her hero's total. She had had the figures, and what remains of the *chronique scandaleuse* of his private life bears out the result of her mental arithmetic. To think of Great Jove in this connection is to think of Solomon. "But King Solomon loved many strange women." The same might be said of Pückler, with the rider that he loved them in a strange way. He was more than once shaken by a passion transcending the normal, but this by no means exhausted his individual peculiarities. He was extremely fastidious, and often paralysed with shyness when it came to the point, though he gamely fulfilled the expectations he had aroused.¹ He suffered, in fact, from those almost universal inhibitions which civilization has implanted in human minds; he set himself to overcome them, however, and in particular exerted a strange power over women even when they were absent from him. From Ludmilla backwards they joined him in uncanny rites, and manifested neither surprise nor dismay. It has been suggested that this was due to the hypnotic effect which men of such potent sexual charm exercise, often unconsciously, over women.

It is difficult to connect this radiant figure with vice; and the fact that he lived to so great an age, clear of eye, unshaken in courage, and in beauty immaculate, makes it harder still. Rahel Varnhagen von Ense, a singularly penetrating woman, spoke of his indestructible innocence. He himself confided to his

¹ He had no children by Lucie and remarkably few illegitimate children, possibly only two.

diary towards the end of his life that he had no conviction of sin in this respect and that it had never done him any harm. He remained so miraculously young in appearance that he was greeted by an old acquaintance in England in 1851 as the son of the Pückler she had known in 1827. The spirit in which he tackled his innumerable lighter loves, his frank, graceful enjoyment of these pleasures, generally kept them sweet; whilst the element of adventure and romance in nearly all his affairs saved him from staleness and weariness and the corruption of the flesh. He was also far too candid and outspoken with women to induce them to sin unawares; his was not the method employed in the *Liaisons Dangereuses*.

According to an interesting modern theory Don Juan, like Pückler, was the victim of an early fixation on his mother.¹ His ceaseless search for the ideal mate who should replace her led him from one woman to another, and always in vain. Disappointed everywhere he would turn at times to seek in intercourse with men what no relationship ever completely supplied. Pückler's career as a rake followed the main life-lines of his literary prototype closely enough. But behind the spur of a frustrated desire was the lure of a mystical danger, a stronger incitement still. Death broods over the creation of life. Its insidious menace is felt in the ecstasy of passion; it calls with the siren voice of peril to all the great adventurers in

¹ I am indebted to the kindness of Dr William Brown, M.D., M.R.C.P., of 88 Harley Street, for this theory, and for many illuminating suggestions on the subject of Pückler's sexual aberrations. The explanation of unconscious hypnotism also came from him.

life. Pückler was one of these. Faithless, restless, roving, he was constant as the needle to the pole where danger seemed to lurk. Witness the night he spent with the bodies of his ancestors in the family vault to learn the secrets of death.

CHAPTER V

THE HERO

LUCIE, Countess of Pappenheim, *née* Hardenberg, was forty years of age in 1817, when she married her second husband, who was then thirty-one. She had been a beautiful blonde in her youth, and was still comely, but growing rather fat. The elements were much mixed in this remarkable woman. She was a grand lady who knew the world and yet had retained a certain childishness beyond the reach of logic. Highly intelligent, at times charmingly witty and wise, she had a hasty temper, and was given to violent emotional reactions. She resembled Pückler in her extravagance and artistic tastes, but she was inferior to him intellectually. Her head was ever at the mercy of her heart, which seemed in the first years of their common life a supremely loving one. This faculty for devotion conquered Pückler completely. Lucie never stirred his senses, but there was a quality in his affections for her which no other human being aroused. She gave him such proofs of love and understanding during his "Helminomania" that he began to consider her as his second self. The sweetness of his own nature is apparent in his increasing regard for his wife, even when she stood between himself and the woman he considered lawfully his own. He relied implicitly on

her sympathy and indulgence; he confided in her his every thought, for he was subjugated by her well-nigh superhuman selflessness. Soothing, temporising, procrastinating and yielding when it seemed that the taut bow would snap, Lucie handled a most delicate situation in a manner which earned his almost passionate gratitude :

For you know that, far from loving you, nay worshipping you any the less because I owe to you every pleasure which Helmine gives me, I love you on the contrary ever more.¹

But Lucie's self-conquest was not as complete as her actions implied. Dazzled by his personality, she had fallen in love with him before their marriage, and suffered most cruelly from his ruthless pursuit of Helmine. She wrote a note in the margin of this letter which shows how bitterly she felt on the subject :

Yes, you are good, very good; but you cannot feel another's pain, because you have never been hurt. . . . I am quite indifferent to your love for others, for your feeling for me lacks delicacy. Ah, how my heart has already been tortured by this. Consider my life, so sadly incomplete.²

Nevertheless they were so closely knit together by affection that they considered the prospect of a divorce as a positive disaster. Lucie headed the letter in which she gave him back his freedom in 1823 with the words : "Death sentence of the unhappiest

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, v., p. 115; letter from Pückler to Lucie; dated from Aix, September 17, 1818.

² *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

woman in the world." She had been unspeakably happy with him, she wrote, and her love remained unaltered. His feelings, too, would never change, she knew. But she was too old for him, and desired him to take another wife, that he might enjoy the realities of marriage and beget heirs. The true reason for this decision was not stated. It was purely financial. Pückler had no wish to marry again; extra-marital pleasures were sweet, and he was by no means philoprogenitive. The difference in their ages had, however, resulted in the gradual cessation of their conjugal relations, which had always been of the slightest. They were now and henceforward on Platonic terms of a strongly emotional nature, living in an intimacy which can only be regarded as recklessly close, since it was fraught with danger to the spiritual freedom of both, and one of them worshipped liberty. Pückler, who had married Lucie for her money with such airy bravado, found that he had run his head into the noose of love, and was without the wish to extricate it. On the contrary, the idea of severing the legal tie literally appalled him, for it opened his eyes to the nature of his feelings for Lucie, which had become almost terrifyingly strong. She was indispensable to his happiness. She might be hot-tempered and unreasonable; there might be gunpowder in her knitting-bag and tiresome scenes in her vicinity; she might lose her head in emergencies and wail over misfortunes; but she loved him so absolutely that she had become a part of his very being. The dreaded separation came near to breaking his heart. The mournful note of elegy echoes and

re-echoes in his letters amidst talk of undying love and legal documents to end the union. For the first time is heard the plaint, often repeated thenceforward, that he had said good-bye to his youth. His very dreams took on a melancholy character. Gone were the golden minarets and the slender towers he had once visualised in his sleep.

Lucie, on her side, began to lament and repine as the inevitable end drew near. Pückler piteously implored her to be calm. Let her say the word and they would live in poverty and happiness together; but if she had set her heart on a rich marriage for their mutual benefit she must not sap his courage by complaints. For his part he was at the end of his endurance; a little more and he would lose his reason. They were dark days in which the frantic couple awaited their divorce in this unorthodox state of mind. Whilst showing great courage and presence of mind at every fresh financial blow, Pückler was unable to hold his head upright when he thought of the sorrow he was causing Lucie, and of the pain the separation meant to both. With a generosity no less remarkable than his unquestioning trust, he made over all his possessions, including Muskau, to his sometime wife. He would depend on her entirely in the future, he wrote; and it was only upon the earnest representation of his lawyers that he had added a clause to the effect that she would forfeit possession if she married again. He assured her lovingly that he knew full well that he had nothing to fear in this respect. Lucie replied rather tartly that stranger things had happened; she would not

seek for a husband, but she could not answer for her heart. He was half tickled and half outraged :

You silly old thing . . . do you think I should ever allow that ? . . . I know that there is not the remotest possibility of it as long as I remain alive.¹

After their divorce the quondam husband and wife spent some melancholy weeks in Muskau ; she then accompanied him as far as Bautzen, where they parted on September 7, 1826, after an affecting farewell, during which both dissolved into hopeless tears.

Whilst Pückler was in England he wrote volumes to Lucie, covering several sheets a day, and dispatching them two or three times a week. It was a habit which was not broken until just before her death. He daily addressed some lines at least to the comrade of his heart during their frequent separations, and she did much the same by him. They were both far too sensitive, far too desperately loving not to hurt and wound, depress and agitate, even enrage one another at times. Letters written in one mood would be read in another. Lucie was always ready to reproach, Pückler was quick to protest ; but on the whole his letters from England are a monument to a friendship as perfect as frankness, trustfulness, love and tenderness could make it. Lucie's letters, awaited so eagerly and often with such passionate

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, vi., p. 321 ; letter from Pückler to Lucie ; dated from Berlin, January 29, 1826. Pückler's deed of gift to Lucie must have been cancelled later, probably on account of practical difficulties. From the unpublished correspondence it appears that he allowed her £750 a year ; but there was never a sharp dividing line between his income and hers.

impatience, were generally balm to his spirit and comfort to his mind.

They were almost beside themselves with joy when they met again, laughing and crying like two children ; but shortly after his return the situation between them began to go seriously awry. Their financial position was worse than ever, and Pückler was still hoping to better it by marriage. His experiences in England had taught him the useful lesson that it was hopeless to embark upon this enterprise whilst he and Lucie were still living under one roof. In a letter written on April 14, 1832, he put this dilemma before her and placed the decision in her hands. Could she bring herself to leave Muskau for a time—until his purpose was accomplished—without too great a sacrifice of her feelings? If she felt that this was beyond her power they must continue as they were and hope for the best ; no riches could make him happy if Lucie were miserable ; and in the last resort he could renounce everything, but he could not relinquish her love. If this were to be diminished by a temporary separation, then they certainly must not part. A week later he wrote even more warmly to the same effect ; and when he had had her answer he was offering to marry her all over again, and let the world smile if it liked.

The time has come to revise the impression of Lucie which has prevailed until now. Whether life were changing her or merely stripping her of her outside wrappings is a difficult question ; the more so since her letters until 1834 were burned, whereas the later ones remain. Up to the present period she had

seemed a woman who, with many faults and a violent disposition, was capable of the utmost abnegation in love. She had been really magnanimous on the subject of Pückler's open unfaithfulness, and little short of angelic where Helmine was concerned. It may have been easier to bear because he made her his *confidante*, for in the mixed emotion of jealousy the most tormenting element is probably the suspicion that one is being deceived, and therefore doubly betrayed; but she bore it with an unusually good grace. She had also generously given him her whole fortune and had been the first to propose a divorce in his interests. It would be churlish to ask for more striking proofs of selfless and disinterested love. But from the outset these impetuous generositys were often followed by reproaches and even upbraidings. No sooner had the proceedings for the divorce begun than she uplifted her voice and bewailed her martyred lot. When Pückler wrote from England suggesting that she should retire for a time to Branitz in order to produce a good impression on the English, she overwhelmed him with contumely and made off, lamenting that he was driving her into exile. This situation now recurred with greater intensity, for her reactions were becoming more violent and more loveless; her egotism was rearing its head. Illogical she was by nature; her mind was not constructed to receive that clear high wave-length of the human octave which is fatuously called common sense.

She had now been several years divorced from him, and although they had slipped back into the

habit of living together in Muskau, she was no more his wife in fact than she was before the law. She drew an adequate allowance from him, and there her rights ended. Also, as a reasonable human being, she should have been able to appreciate the fact that if the divorce were to prove of any practical value she must complete the sacrifice and retire. But reason, as Pückler sympathetically observed, has nothing to do with love. From this point of view there were many excuses to be found for her, and he found them all. When she wrote as from beyond the grave, "Think of me as the one who loved you most," he was disarmed and affected to tears; but even through his tears he saw clearly that their present mode of life was suicidal to both. Lucie made a show of yielding: she sketched another noble gesture of renunciation, and left Muskau with all the solemnity of one who bids an eternal farewell. But hardly had she accomplished this self-denying act before she gave way to that ungovernable and spiteful temper which embittered his life so much. She was in a mood to take umbrage at every trifle. He was childishly proud of a copying machine he had bought in England; she never let an opportunity slip of making some disparaging comment on this "glorious invention." He described a game he had had with his dogs; she insinuated that he was far happier without her. One of his daily letters was short because he was busy with a new book; she countered by begging him not to write at all lest he waste some precious drop of wit on her, who was so immeasurably beneath him. Is this the language of a woman who loves another

better than herself? She seemed, on the contrary, to be in the throes of an envious, possessive and egotistical emotion which set out to destroy every pleasure and happiness which Pückler did not owe to her.

Shortly after the last benediction from Lucie, Pückler set out for Hamburg in pursuance of his schemes, with thoughts obsessed by the idea of suicide and a mind determined to woo. He returned without having been able to force himself to the point of a proposal; and some languid efforts made in Leipzig also remained abortive. There was, however, some vague talk of a Jewess in Berlin; and he wrote to Lucie cautiously, emphasising the necessity of an apparent separation until the negotiations were complete. This faint, far hope appeared within the bounds of possibility, he told her a few days later, on July 15, 1833. He added that Lucie, who was part of his very being, must certainly return to Muskau once the goal was reached. It might then become a paradise; it was now a very hell, with care, the fury, spreading its bat-like wings above them both and staring at them through a death-like mask. Vague and faint as the hope might be, it was definite enough to arouse in Lucie a positive frenzy of anger. On July 15 she also wrote to him, answering his previous letter, which she had taken terribly amiss. That was the true bill of divorcement, she declaimed; now indeed their ways must henceforth inexorably diverge. If it were her aim to make a second marriage impossible for Pückler, she accomplished it by this letter, written on the same day he

had been thinking of her with such real affection. He broke down completely when he had read it; it wrung his heart as he read it again. He knew that he could not endure a rupture. If she envisaged this marriage of convenience as a final parting, then the idea must be abandoned. He could never cause her a sorrow of this kind; it would be a sin against true love, the only crime he knew. She must come to him at once and comfort him; impossible to think of the Jewess now.

Lucie had triumphed; the stately doors of Muskau were open to her again. Pückler resumed his load of difficulties and debts; the bat-like figure of care, spreading its wings over the seeming pomp and luxury of his life, hovered a little closer, and the trees in the forest drooped.

She did not hold the monopoly of emotional and nervous reactions in this household. Truth to tell, they were an unstable couple, and equilibrium between them was rarely established for long. She could not live happily when deprived of his vitalising presence; he could not conquer his restlessness even for her. When the storms she had lately raised had swept through him, he lifted his eyes and beheld an insufferable world. Hatred for Muskau, disgust for his own country, an imperious desire for adventures and freedom urged him to fly, it mattered not whither. Again she tried to chain him down, although she behaved valiantly about the duel. He was not to be held; but the letter he wrote to be sent to her in the event of his death shows that she was always first in his thoughts. The characteristic request that she

should never marry again but wear half mourning for him until she died is a further proof that the conviction of Lucie's unswerving devotion was the most cherished of all his dreams.

But he was profoundly right to go. Life, as the tragic writers understand it, had him in its stranglehold, and he must break loose or go under. The clash between his temperament and Lucie's was jangling and martyrising his nerves. It is saying a good deal for him to say that they still rang true. Restless, moody and miserable, he yet reacted with a beautiful swiftness and directness to the calls on his courage and the demands on his heart; his affection for Lucie bubbled up without effort from the fathomless well of a temperament which could withstand the severest drought. It was time for heroic measures nevertheless, for they were on different sides in the battle of life.

Uncertainty is the element which most threatens the peace of mind of those whose ideals are stability and security; others are suffocated by the monotony of existence as with a poisonous gas. These two different natures will never completely understand each other, the conditions which make for their happiness being diametrically opposed. Those who do not care for freedom strive to create a paradise of permanence and safety, a peaceful island in the sea of life, whence they may defy its shipwrecks and storms. The others are always seeking to escape from this island, which they look upon as a cage. It is not easy to say which will come off worst in the struggle for happiness. Permanence and security

are complete illusions; they may be shattered at any moment, but they may also, for the space of a lifetime, endure. Whereas he who would conquer freedom will never fully succeed. It may seem to flood round him in youth, but all too soon he will find himself enclosed in a net. The sordid side of existence is dragging him slowly down and destroying the illusion of liberty—an element as vital to his spirit as air is necessary to the lungs. The net has many meshes: duties and ties; material limitations; domestic affections; anxieties and cares. How shall a man escape? By tearing his way through the web? Almost certainly he will then first be obliged to vanquish the traitor within him called love. He will be fortunate indeed if he is linked to no other human being who also threatens to drag him down in the effort to pull him back. This was the situation between Pückler and Lucie, and the issue was tragically clear. They were struggling together, as man and woman so frequently must, she for the continuity and immutability of existence, he for freedom and change. The victory still hung in the balance. He left her, but he left her in Muskau, knowing that he would return. It was never the cage that would tempt him back; but, like a wild animal caught and caressed, something within him was tamed.

The only shadow on Pückler's radiant mood in Africa was the slowness of the mails. The months which sometimes elapsed between Lucie's letters drove him nearly distracted. He missed her most cruelly, he thought of her perpetually; he was always

sending her cases full of gifts. At times he even played with the idea of rushing back to Muskau to see her for a day or two and make sure that all was well. Lucie suffered the wearing anxiety of an almost intolerable suspense. She visualised him surrounded by the most dreadful perils, and her frequent ignorance as to his movements preyed upon her mind ; she knew hardly a moment's peace at first :

My grief on the sea,
How the waves of it roll,
For it heaves between me
And the love of my soul !

Such was the refrain of these ardent friends, who for good or ill could not tear themselves apart without spiritual agony. The situation was undoubtedly easier for Pückler, whose mind was occupied by new scenes and who was leading the nomadic life for which nature had intended him. But Lucie, too, had one great central interest to absorb her. To the cat-like attachment of women for familiar places and to a strong possessive instinct she added a passionate devotion to Pückler's creation, in which she had collaborated from the outset. During his absence she managed his estate, supervised the planting and felling, ordered everything as far as possible according to his wishes, and even increased the economic value of his property by developing the alum-works which he had established. Meanwhile, time did something, if not very much, to soothe the ache of longing ; time, too, was bringing the long-delayed meeting slowly nearer ; but,

when it took place at last, it was not the rapturous moment of which both had so often dreamt. They had inevitably changed during the six long years. The heart of the one had grown harder; the heart of the other had been touched in a way which had been Lucie's prerogative until now. Two women swayed that elusive spirit where one alone had been dominant before.

The dawn of love will often break with an ethereal brightness, shedding gaiety and irresponsibility over some pair of lovers who may be doomed to witness the saddest sunset. Who would have prophesied, when Pückler airily purchased a couple of Abyssinian slaves in the open market, that he was courting a heart-rending experience, the most piercing he ever knew? Certainly not Macbuba's lord and master, who bought her lovely body in the lightest of moods after examining it with the eye of a *connoisseur*. She was beautiful as a copper-gold *Venus* of Titian, with an attractive *minois chiffonné*, teeth like pearls and a skin of satin, without a single blemish. Exquisitely neat and clean, the most admirable of slaves, she created order and comfort wherever she might be, and tendered an absolute devotion to Pückler from the day she met him until the day she died. This was a quality to which he had already once surrendered. But Macbuba had another weapon in her armoury fated to find its way to an even more vulnerable spot in his heart. She was a completely unspoiled and artless child of nature, with the engaging manners of the animal world. Pückler, whose love of animals was one of the strongest and most selfless of his



MACBUBA, THE ABYSSINIAN SLAVE-GIRL.

instincts, succumbed utterly to this charm. He tried to express his feelings for her by calling them half paternal; but there are no ready-made words in language to characterise the nature of his emotions. He was her lover—at one time an almost insatiable lover—but he also worshipped her as the incarnation of all that is appealing, touching and strangely humiliating to man in the unerring instinct, the untaught grace and the incorruptible innocence of the brute creation.

This does not mean that Macbuba was perfect. She could behave like a little tiger-cat. He began by spoiling her; she responded by becoming capricious, rebellious and downright naughty. Pückler had the self-control to punish her severely and to keep her in disgrace until he had undone the mischief. He never indulged himself by spoiling her again. He would watch her unobtrusively for hours, learning her ways, delighting in her spontaneous nature, allowing her as much freedom as was practicable and treating her as a comrade. Unconscious of wrongdoing, this yielding little creature once permitted another to take liberties with her during her master's absence. He scolded her severely when the affair was reported to him, and threatened, half in earnest, to send her away next day. She fell prostrate at his feet, embraced them without a word, ran into the next room and flung herself out of the window. Pückler was only just in time to rescue her by her draperies, which had caught on a nail. She was in a death-like faint. When she recovered she cried so bitterly and with such hopeless despair,

begging him to kill her rather than banish her from his beloved countenance, that he, no less shattered than she, forgave her on the spot. Whereupon she fell asleep contentedly and happily in his arms.

Evil communications corrupt good manners, it is said, and some may see in Macbuba's lapse from faithfulness the dire influence of her master at work. But if the wild little savage, who began by treating him to sulks and storms, who threw his presents overboard in a fit of childish rage, and whose ignorance was as dense as the tropical forests whence she hailed, became later gentle, wise and sweet whilst retaining all her native simplicity and charm, it is to the credit of the middle-aged *roué*, who taught her all she knew and watched over the birth-pangs of her spiritual awakening. Those who saw her later were entranced by her exquisite manners and the pure goodness of her heart. Pückler had formed the first, he had not contaminated the latter. Let the moralists decide how this miracle had occurred; he was unaware that there was one. His reverence for nature was such that he was incapable of corrupting her, whilst the sweet knowledge of her absolute dependence engendered courtesy, chivalry and selfless love.

The would-be Turk was caught. He was behaving in a most unorthodox fashion from the Oriental point of view. But outwardly at least his harem, even after it had dwindled to one inmate, conformed to the traditions of the East. Could he and Macbuba have remained in Egypt or Asia Minor, this idyllic relationship would have caused no ripples on the surface of social life. But he must return to Europe;

and since she would certainly die if she were parted from him, and he could not contemplate life without her, it became necessary to think out a plan of campaign with which to conquer his world. Pückler was sufficiently disdainful of public opinion to brave the witheringly trivial interpretation of society at large. In addition he was far-famed enough by now and a great enough lord to make the world accept Macbuba as his adopted daughter and Lucie's *dame de compagnie*. This was to be her public position, and he proved triumphantly in Vienna that he had not overrated his powers and her charm. Together they proved irresistible. Scandal and mockery were silent. Macbuba was received at Court; Metternich and his wife paid her all manner of attentions; great ladies petted her; she was given a box at the opera and was the heroine of the hour; whilst he, surrounded, *fêted*, flattered, with memories of the East in his eyes, was the lion of the moment, the idol of the fashionable world.

So far, so good; but it was not very far. Macbuba had still to be smuggled into Muskau—precious, illegal contraband; Lucie was still to be placated—a different task from taking Vienna by storm.

Pückler had begun to prepare her mind as early as 1837. A casual reference to his beautiful Abyssinian slave-girl was made with artful nonchalance from Khene on September 12, 1837. On November 15 he ingenuously informed her that heaven alone knew what he would bring home from his menagerie. It now consisted of two female slaves, two boys, two gazelles, two monkeys, a magnificent dromedary

and three horses. Macbuba, he obviously hoped, would become equated in Lucie's mind with the dromedary and the gazelles as something very difficult to transport. Several months were allowed, to let this point of view sink in and to avoid all appearance of eagerness and anxiety. Then from Jerusalem in February 1838 was heard a voice modestly pleading for material comfort in Muskau. He had become so much accustomed to his harem and to his slaves that it would be hard, indeed almost impossible, to do without them at home. They could be established in the blue room, where he could sleep—for the members of the harem were just like little dogs, and no more bother; they were clean and convenient, with the most modest wants and no pretensions of any kind, eating the crumbs from their master's table, never leaving their room without permission, performing the most menial services with the greatest willingness, and full of gratitude and joy at any trifle bestowed on them; the most obliging of mistresses in short, and as cheap as dirt. And now, copying the picture of the Turk he had meant to be, Pückler presented it for Lucie's inspection as the reality. With considerable guile he informed her that he beat his slaves if they were not attentive enough, automatically changing from German to French as he made this misleading statement. Let Lucie make no mistake: he was now really a Turk, but unhappily an old one, who needed implicit obedience in his mistresses and a dog-like devotion; for he could no longer expect them to be in love with him. And, in any case, that kind

of love never lasted. Europeans were the greatest nincompoops with their wives. Turks understood the matter better; they venerated their mothers. Lucie was his beloved mother, and she must not interfere with his concubines. Surely, he thought, as he put the finishing touches to this masterpiece, surely Lucie would never guess that he was in love. For he knew his Schnucke. One of the least jealous of women where mere physical pleasure was concerned, she was apt to be restive and possessive when it came to affairs of the heart. But since he was still using the plural for the singular, he hoped that, even without the camouflage of the menagerie, her eyes would not pierce through the curtain of his harem and discover the woman he loved. A fortnight later he felt constrained to mention her name. Of the four slaves he was bringing home, the little negro boy was destined for Lucie's use; he would probably have to give away the younger girl, as she was too delicate for Europe, but the elder girl, Macbuba, was his personal valet, who rarely left his side day or night, and she could not be left behind. The name had now been spoken; the spoken word has power.

At first Lucie responded lightly, and it is possible that she might have continued to attach very little importance to his harem had Pückler been capable of continuing the carefully elaborated deceit. But he was entirely unused to hiding anything from Lucie. He failed to sustain the part. The Turkish *technique* broke down lamentably. He began to try to win her over by other means, chiefly by descriptions of

Macbuba, in which love and truth, beautiful but fateful sisters, were at length unveiled, with their customary devastating effect. In vain did he hang a cynical tag on to the end of a loving sketch of the sweet, gentle, beautiful little thing; it was quite clear that he adored her, and that the little black devil who was to be Lucie's page was the only slave who had ever felt his rod. Macbuba was no longer an integral part of his menagerie; she was not even a favourite slave; the curtain of the harem was rent in twain, revealing a woman loving and beloved.

Lucie's reaction was as violent as it had every cause to be; indeed her case must be stated for her, as the passionate exaggeration of her language ruins impartiality in the reader. Such expressions as "my torn and bleeding heart, my few remaining days, brutish libertine," and the like, alienate the best-disposed mind.

From the worldly point of view Pückler's proposal to establish his harem in Muskau was too fantastic to appeal to any *châtelaine*, however sweetly reasonable. Lucie's appeal to the conventions and the decencies of life is not without common sense. When the harem was discovered to contain only one Abyssinian girl, colour prejudice was probably responsible for a purely instinctive recoil. Few will blame her here; the most broadminded in such matters shrink from racial promiscuity. The knowledge that her beloved friend had entered upon such a union might well cause her great consternation and intense suffering; greater still the realisation that Pückler loved Macbuba tenderly, truly and devotedly, for this

endangered the fundamental basis of his relationship with Lucie. She armed herself to defend it. And yet, natural and inevitable as this attitude was, it throws no very pleasant light on her former complaisance. She could jest and laugh over his cynical presentation of harem life, but she mounted the great guns of morality when it threatened to come nearer home. She could condone his intercourse with a coloured girl, but not the feeling that made it respectable. She would rather have him dissolute and corrupt than loving another as truly as herself. The seemingly complicated problem has been analysed down to this: a jealous and possessive woman enduring no sister near the throne.

It was a long and painful struggle between two wilful and determined natures; but whereas the one was convinced of loving the other with an almost superhuman affection, the other, who made no such claims, did in fact very staunchly and loyally continue to love. On her side, storms alternated with pleadings and a show of graceful yielding; she indulged him with bitter-sweet reproaches, cajolings and flattery, followed by spiteful outbursts, which were succeeded by forgiveness and apparent capitulation; kind messages to Macbuba and malicious innuendoes trod each other on the heels. Her lamentations and recriminations became more frequent as the danger came ever nearer. Brooding over this cauldron of mixed emotions, some false, some true, hung the ever-persistent threat that if Pückler brought Macbuba to Muskau, Lucie would leave it for ever in the selfsame hour. Meanwhile she had carefully

committed what he generously called the blunder of letting all Berlin society know that the white man was the black girl's lover, thus, as she hoped, making it impossible for him to establish Macbuba in the castle. On his side, a series of hopeless attempts to present Macbuba to Lucie in an acceptable light. Much as he had cried "Mother and son" in England, he now chanted "Mother and son, father and daughter" into Lucie's ear. Granted that there was some truth in both these tasteless *clichés*, one might yet be tempted to see in the fatuous optimism which could hope to conjure with them one of the causes of the present deadlock. To think that Lucie would behave like a mother at this juncture was absurd; and the effort to transform her into Macbuba's grandmother was positively grotesque. Yet the fault was more Lucie's than Pückler's. She had first originated the maternity myth; she was never tired of developing and elaborating it, for she liked the part as long as it was devoid of reality. Pückler had always implicitly believed what she said; his disillusion was the greater when the famous phrase produced no effect. It was altogether a bitter disillusion; for, once she had realised that his happiness was bound up in Macbuba, she would and must have given way if her love were really as selfless and devoted as she had always declared it to be. She was furnishing him with other proofs to the contrary in this, one of the darkest hours of his life. Meanwhile he went on building on the sand. He sketched the relationship between master and slave in a manner calculated to lay jealousy to sleep; and he summed up the whole situation in

a way which should have found an echo in Lucie's heart :

En effet, je ne tiens plus au monde que par deux êtres, une mère et une fille, toutes les deux adoptives. Two opposite poles, united in me, differing in everything but one point, a common goodness of heart. And why should I be so firmly attached to both? Because *I* cannot live without the one, the white one but not the wise one; and the *other*, the black one with the white heart, cannot live without me.¹

It was all in vain. Lucie remained sullen and obdurate. Pückler, unable to change her heart, was yet incapable of wounding her by bringing Macbuba to Muskau without her free consent. He could only refuse to come unaccompanied by his little slave. A strange situation, possibly without parallel in story : a divorced wife dictating the terms on which her former husband might enter his own house. It never occurred to him to remind her that she had no rights in Muskau. In spite of bitter provocation he probably did not remember it himself. She was still Schnucke, even if she were in a cold rage and dreadfully unkind. She could not really have changed so much; a little more patience, a little more time, and she would love Macbuba yet.

Lucie never loved Macbuba; but in the end her hand was forced. If she had known the meaning of compassion she would have surrendered months before and with a better grace. For the contest, which

¹ Letter from Pückler to Lucie; dated from Vienna, 1840; quoted by Ludmilla Assing in her *Life* of Pückler, ii., pp. 169-170.

had become ever more acrimonious on her side since Pückler had been in Europe, was being waged over the body of a dying girl, and both the combatants knew it. As the autopsy showed later on, Macbuba was in an advanced stage of consumption, and doomed to die young. Pückler was probably right in maintaining that she would have perished within twenty-four hours if he had left her behind in a warmer climate ; but the transportation to Europe accelerated her disease. He placed her in a *pension* in Vienna to save her from the fatigues of the social life ; and it was here that she first began to lose strength visibly, in spite of his daily visits. He took her back into his own care ; but it was too late, she was now mortally sick. With an anguished and aching heart he watched the slow process of dissolution, whilst her fragile body exhaled the fragrance of her spirit with such poignancy that his whole being was racked with pity, compassion and love. He kept Lucie informed of her rival's state of health, but there was no sign of softening in that quarter. His little Eastern shadow was still inexorably taboo.

The cruelty of which a jealous woman is capable is a commonplace of psychology. Lucie conformed rigidly to the conventional behaviour of her type. Pückler's markedly original nature was fraught with a radiant goodness of heart which throws a most annihilating light into the darker recesses of her soul. It was not until the doctor in Marienbad ordered the Muskau baths for Macbuba that he finally abandoned the policy of loving persuasion and brought himself to command. The unhappy couple had both been dangerously ill while they were waiting for admission

to Muskau. Lucie was alarmed by the accounts of his weakness and softened towards him at last. She gave in with seeming graciousness. Macbuba was carried into the hunting-lodge; she was allowed somewhat later to die in the castle itself. Magnanimity could go no further; but the bitterness in Lucie's heart was not conquered:

Had it not become a battle with a dying woman, or against a dying woman [she wrote later], I should never have submitted to remain with her in Muskau. As it was, I received her kindly at the hunting-lodge; I spent two days there with her; and two days more in the castle of Muskau under one roof with the dying mistress of the Prince, who should have treated me with more consideration if his heart had not turned to ice towards me.¹

They arrived during the first fortnight of September 1840. At the beginning of October Lucie dragged Pückler off to Berlin, where she kept him, under the pretext that he must spend his birthday with her. It fell on October 30, and was celebrated by one of her explosive scenes. On the following day he heard from Macbuba's physician, Dr Freund, that she had died on October 27.

She had missed him, and looked for his coming in her gentle, uncomplaining way; whilst he, wretchedly accompanying Lucie to social functions in Berlin, had thought of her constantly and longed to be with her. He had not imagined that the end was so near. Dr Freund, who sent him daily reports, had scrupled to

¹ Quoted by Ludmilla Assing in her *Life of Pückler*, ii., pp. 179-180; not dated.

alarm him. And so it came about that she died alone, a human sacrifice brought to Lucie, one of those offerings which strew the paths of loveless women who are for ever exacting love.

It was a tragic loss for Pückler, aggravated by the bitter knowledge that he had left her to die alone. A searing pain, such as he had never known before, gripped and clutched at his heart. Their relationship had been singularly perfect—one of those rare mediums through which two different spirits may communicate directly without let or strain. Giving and taking between them had melted into one; her complete dependence on him had awakened a love on his side which had nothing to do with the flesh. All the more desolate and forlorn did Pückler feel as he knelt by her body in Muskau, and begged her for a sign, or fell prostrate on her grave imploring her to kiss him on the cheek. The wind had pity on him, a flower swayed and caressed him; his secret self had mercy, she appeared to him in a dream.

Sorrow such as he experienced then must wear itself out or take on a pathological colouring. The more selfless the love the less likely such a danger will be. He whose heart has the upper hand over his nerves will not transmute an emotional grief into a mental breakdown. Pückler's heart was great enough to dominate his unstable temperament at this crisis in his life. He suffered as few have the capacity to suffer, but with courage and as becomes a man. He forced himself to attend to the affairs of his estate. Before a fortnight had passed he was able to write with a quiet acceptance of fact, which is more moving than the self-



MACBUBA.

pity of the inconsolable, that time was beginning to exert its possibly beneficent and yet horrible rights. For the dazed and bewildered mourner cannot stay the course of life, which encroaches on all sides, transforming the desert of his soul. Hateful duties and wearisome occupations distract his attention. Old ties will not be severed, new interests take root in what was once a barren waste of sorrow swept by the wind of pain. He looks back—startled. The greatness and the dreadful emptiness are gone. Kindly and cynically life has destroyed them lest he fall in love with death. He submits. Those who know real despair do not turn from comfort and are not found despising trifling distractions. Every moment won from utter desolation is a positive gain. Languidly at first the mourner potters about in the dreary garden of everyday existence. It may reward him later. Life may scatter other seeds. You never can tell with life.

In the years to come the one woman from whom he never wished, even temporarily, to escape faded into the background of Pückler's thoughts. Rosa's memory was more vivid than hers until just before the end. Then Macbuba stirred sweetly in his dying heart, flooding it with love. It was not only his little slave who sent him a last "buon buon addio" in 1840; faintly, from a great distance, youth too bade him farewell, and a mournful echo floated back from over the sea in the falling silence. He was never to travel eastward again.

Contemporaneously with the clash between Lucie and Pückler on the subject of Macbuba there occurred an even more fundamental difference of

opinion with regard to Muskau. In Constantinople, news of a most welcome nature had reached the returning rover. One of the richest landowners in Prussia, a Count Renard, was seriously considering the purchase of Muskau. Through the agency of a family friend, called Muschwitz, the negotiations went swiftly forward, and culminated in a firm offer of £195,000 from the Count; this meant, after liquidating all debts and paying all pensions and salaries, £75,000 of ready money completely unencumbered — an assured and steady income of between £3000 and £4000 a year. It would need someone whose affairs had been as inextricably involved as Pückler's to understand the immeasurable relief of so providential a cutting of the Gordian knot. The hopeless confusion of the Muskau finances vexed his order-loving mind. The accumulating burden of debts troubled his spirit. The galling sense of captivity rendered him almost frantic at times. He did not love his creation. He was master of his medium, he told Lucie, but had never been mastered by it. Underlying this proud assertion was the unexpressed fear that Muskau would conquer him in the end. Its vampire-like quality, its octopus tentacles, its inert and monstrous weight increased with every year. It had become a waking nightmare. Then the miracle he had so desperately hoped for and so despondently doubted came to pass. The door swung slowly open, he saw freedom face to face. How eagerly and yet how cautiously he approached the threshold. This most impetuous of men schooled himself to subdue the tumult in his heart. Warily,

cannily, discreetly, with assumed nonchalance and indifference, he crept gingerly past the crouching monster Muskau towards the liberty beyond. Every feature was composed, every movement studied. Fate was not challenged by premature rejoicings; he would not even allow himself to hope, but the light which flooded in through the open door was reflected and blazed in his eyes.

Among the precautions vitally necessary to success Pückler considered it essential that Lucie should be kept in ignorance during the preliminary negotiations. He feared that, in her anxiety to help him, she would take some impulsive step and endanger the whole transaction, which was being conducted with the utmost secrecy on both sides. As soon as Count Renard made a definite offer, Pückler wrote to Lucie from Constantinople on August 6, 1839, apprising her of the situation, urging her to meet him in Vienna to settle the final details, and expressing his delight at the realisation of their most cherished wish. Through the indiscretion of some third party Lucie had, unluckily, been let into the secret on July 26. She was beside herself. No more hurtful manner could have been devised by fate for breaking such portentous news. On the first showing it certainly seemed as if Pückler had been grossly neglectful and selfish to keep her in the dark on a matter which affected her vitally. The slowness of the mails and the crossing of letters contributed to the irritating effect of this reading of the situation. Weeks, even months, elapsed before Lucie was in a position to realise that Pückler's

silence had been reasonable and even kindly—based on a desire not to compromise the sale and not to raise false hopes, for they had often agreed on the desirability of getting rid of Muskau.

He was not to know that her mind was completely changed. Whilst he had been conquering fresh worlds she had been ruling over Muskau and falling hopelessly under its spell. It had become the very condition of her existence; those who have seen it on a summer night will understand how it had captured her heart. She felt too old, she was too old, to be uprooted without a terrible struggle. Pückler might be elusive and unseizable; Muskau, for all its mysterious enchantment, was a solid possession for which she would fight with her latest breath. Well might she compare herself to a lioness roaring for her cub. There is that elemental quality in the four letters which she sent off on the day she heard the news to as many different addresses, in order to make sure that one at least would reach him with dispatch. She even employed a special messenger to bear her explosive words across the sea. She had been baleful about Macbuba, but she had also exerted some self-control. The sale of Muskau touched her much more nearly. She gave way to that hysterical raving which was one of her besetting sins. It needs only metre and rhyme to make her railings indistinguishable from the rant of a seventeenth-century tragedy queen :

My God, my God, oh hear me as I pray :
Let me not live to see the fatal day ;
Enlighten him, or in this dreadful night
Take me to Thee. Ah would that long I might



LUCIE, PRINCESS PÜCKLER-MUSKAU.

Have been a frozen corpse and ashes cold
Ere that the park of Muskau had been sold ;
Before I lived to know despair like this,
Thrown without mercy into grief's abyss.

If there is any feeling in *your* breast,
One spark of pity, but the smallest rest
Of kindness ; oh incline, incline your ear
To this my pleading, and my warning hear.

Not only that you tread me neath your feet,
But in the whole wide world you shall not meet
One heart to call your own ; piteous and lone,
A banished man, a wand'rer without home,
Bedewing alien soil with anguished sweat
And contrite tears, you'll be remorseful yet.
Encompassed round by savage murd'rous men,
Your weary eyes will break at length, and then
By these be closed in cold and heartless wise.
You will not see and bless my dying eyes ;
For I shall no more come within your sight,
Of which I dreamed with so much fond delight,
For which I gladly my heart's blood had shed.
Alas the day ! Oh would that I were dead !¹

Lucie was not satisfied with words. She intended to act. She rushed headlong to Teplitz, sought out Prince Wittgenstein and implored him to hinder Muschwitz's journey to Constantinople until Pückler should have received her letters. She also urged him to write to the latter himself ; a proposal to which he rather unwillingly agreed. She wrote to Metternich, adjuring him by the memory of her

¹ Cf. Ludmilla Assing's *Life* of Pückler, ii., pp. 138-146 ; the passages above have been literally translated and versified without additions or alterations.

dead father not to let Muschwitz leave Europe. Finally she obtained an audience with the King of Prussia, who was then also in Teplitz, and besought him to intervene. It was reported that she precipitated herself into the royal presence, tore off her lace cap, and bowing her grey head before the startled monarch, addressed him with the words: "Sire, I am here as a beggar!" She and others denied this later, but the story has the ring of truth.

All this was very painful and irritating for Pückler, but it did not shake his firm intention to sell Muskau. He appealed to her reason; he recapitulated again and again all the advantages which would result from the sale; he reminded her that she had often expressed a fervent desire for this very event, but in vain. He also struck the emotional chord, although with restraint:

At last I can breathe freely, and feel a new life, a new youth within me. If you could force me to keep Muskau you would make me really and hopelessly unhappy. My worst enemy could do me no more cruel a wrong . . . and it really needs a love built on the rock, as mine is, not to lose all patience with you.¹

In order to silence her and put a stop to her frantic interference, he told her at last that it was his unalterable will, and that she must resign herself or make them both desperately unhappy; for never in his life, he declared, had he been more firmly

¹ Unpublished; letter from Pückler to Lucie from Constantinople; not dated.

resolved on any course than on the sale of Muskau. Lucie saw that open opposition would not avail against such an iron purpose and decided to accomplish by foul means what could not be done by fair. She came as far as Budapesth to meet a man whom she had already betrayed. She had instructed his administrator Grävell to bring a lawsuit against Pückler on the grounds that he had bound himself on becoming a prince to entail the estate, and therefore could not legally sell it. He accidentally opened a letter which revealed this perfidious plot :

Only through the testimony of my own eyes could I have been brought to believe in such conduct from you. If I compare it with my own, it is a piece of treachery which no amount of violent feeling between us can excuse. I forgive it, but it does not lie in my power to forget. It is the last and bitterest disappointment of my life.¹

Although he still maintained in this letter that he was as determined as ever to sell Muskau if it were now possible, his will to do so had in fact been broken by the realisation of Lucie's treachery. He gave in; he broke off the negotiations with Muschwitz; he closed the door on his escape; he made no further reproaches; he never referred to the lawsuit again. He resigned himself with unobtrusive greatness and still continued to love; but he could not go back into slavery just then :

¹ Letter from Pückler to Lucie ; dated from Budapesth, October 1, 1839 ; quoted in Ludmilla Assing's *Life of Pückler*, ii., p. 161. He would probably have won the lawsuit, as he sold Muskau later without legal difficulties.

I have given way in everything, but I have no longer any motive to sacrifice my independence. Let the princess keep Muskau, and let me possess myself!¹

He had been completely disillusioned and cruelly undeceived. Lucie's lovelessness was now glaringly apparent. Recklessly prodigal of fine sentiments and protestations of devotion, she had proved herself one of those spendthrifts who waste their substance in riotous declarations, scatter promissory notes broadcast and are shamelessly insolvent when they are called upon to pay. Justice rarely overtakes such defaulters completely, for their noble speeches somehow become transferred from the debit to the credit side of their account. Confiding friends are taken in again and again. Only those who have suffered a staggering blow through their moral or emotional bankruptcy will see them with dreary, disillusioned eyes as they really are. It is particularly easy to be hoodwinked by such talkers when they vow eternal love. The most modest of human beings, even a Fanny Price, will come to place credence at length in repeated assurances of undying regard. The awakening will always be a rude one; in Pückler's case it was an overwhelming shock, for his conviction of Lucie's unalterable affection had become entangled with the belief in his personal identity.

Far more than the ordinary self-contained mortal can realise, those who radiate power and fascination depend upon a recipient for the projection they call

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, ix., p. 117; diary of January 1, 1840.

self. Their outgoing influence is so abnormally strong that they become a mere focus of light to others and are nothing to themselves; for light is not light, the scientists tell us, if there are no eyes to see. At the other end of the scale, exceptionally receptive natures gravitate towards their opposites and live in their vitalising spirit. Extremely unstable, since their personality is embryonic, they drift from one focus to the next, falling in love slavishly and with complete abandonment; and falling out again, if another influence attracts them, with a suddenness and cynicism which deprives the onlooker of breath. Pückler saw his power annihilated and his very personality called into question when Lucie turned the love which had sustained him from the master to his work. It had never really been what he had thought it. Looking back over the twenty years of their relationship, he now saw that it was founded on a lie. Not only was he robbed of the life-giving illusion of being beloved, the past was stolen from him as well, and a doubt arose in him as to his own reality which tormented and almost unhinged his mind. If Pückler had not had Macbuba with him then, who can say whether he would have remained himself; but she lived long enough for the painful readjustment to be accomplished; and dying, she left him, in all its reality and beauty, their mutual, indestructible past.

It was his complete disillusionment about Lucie which prompted Pückler to shut the door quietly on freedom and to remain in his prison-cell. Liberty or captivity was neither here nor there to a man who

had lost his other self. Life for the moment was void of meaning. The sin against truth had been visited, as so often, not on the liar, but on the one belied. When Pückler, driven thereto by gaunt necessity, finally sold Muskau in 1845, he crept forth blinking into the daylight, and recovered some measure of light-heartedness. He still had the faculty of enjoyment; he was still capable of passionate love; unalterably devoted to Lucie; philandering, eccentric, trifling, dandified, fascinating and absurd. But the wild, rushing rhythm of his mutinous spirit was now a thing of the past.

His health was never the same again. His mind always acted directly on his body; rarely ill if he were care-free, he was seldom really well if he was not, and his physical resistance had been fundamentally weakened by the emotional and mental upheavals of the last two years. He was frequently alarmingly ill; but the sap had not ceased circulating in this barbarously mutilated tree, and his powers of recovery remained unusually great. He had sold Muskau after all, and the world lay open before him once more. There was no serious opposition from Lucie this time. Even she could not blind herself to the fact that they were on the very brink of ruin. Pückler underwent acute nervous tension whilst the Counts Nostitz and Hatzfeld hesitated and drew up agreements. He stole off one night to consult a blind fortune-teller, who prophesied success and gave some curiously exact information. The sale realised £160,000, after £15,000 had been deducted for the worthless property of Waldstein, which Pückler was

forced to take in part exchange. His mood was so devil-may-care that he accepted this condition without inspecting the purchase, and realised when he saw it that he had been made an April fool. The project of settling there with Lucie was abandoned with a half sigh only; for the prospect of settling anywhere had no charms at all for him.

It would be going too far to say that Pückler felt no regrets on leaving Muskau. There was an ache in his heart as he took his last solitary ride over the estate in stormy, melancholy weather; he wheeled suddenly before the terrace and disappeared at a gallop from the mournful gaze of his assembled subjects. But such natural sorrow weighed light in the balance against the relief of being free from debts. He had a clean bill of financial health for the first time in his life, and he revelled in the comfort of having no creditors to face. He kept within his means henceforward, discharging all his affairs punctually and with order. Middle-aged behaviour undoubtedly; but Pückler knew full well that, if it were not too late for contentment and enjoyment, the time had gone for real adventures and great achievements. In spite of his resilient nature, he knew that his spirit was lamed. He often felt and said that his day was over. He would take no more startling leaps, he assured Lucie; for he was only fit nowadays to cut small, harmless capers.

Even these she begrudged him, for her attitude to her former idol was inimical on the whole. In 1840 Lucie had everything she most desired: Pückler had returned at last; Muskau was saved, and Macbuba

was dead. In spite of her deplorable conduct she had not succeeded in alienating Pückler, who still loved her dearly. He made no excessive demands on her sympathy when he lost his little slave, but he did not exclude her from his grief nor comment on the cold and conventional fashion in which she offered her condolences. He still hoped that they could live comfortably together, pleasant companions and sympathetic old friends. But Lucie, having got her way in the essentials, began to run amok about trifles. Unless he did exactly what she wanted, and agreed to everything she said, there was no peace in Muskau. Quarrels and scenes at short intervals were the daily bread which she gave him, Pückler wrote in 1841. Her violence was often accompanied by spite. She told him on one occasion that she would give orders for her little dog Nini to be shot when she died, as he would be sure to neglect it: this to Pückler, who adored all animals, and was even then watching over an ailing bitch day and night like a nurse. She became unpleasantly grasping about money, spent far too much on unnecessary luxuries, and grudged him every penny that went to the park. She greeted a stroke of luck which befell him in 1843 with real animosity, spoke enviously of his "great wealth," and demanded her full share. She picked quarrels with him publicly at dinner-time, provoking him to lose his temper, at which the blood would rush to his head so violently that he often feared a stroke. He was forced to have his meals at the times that suited her; she opposed his wish for a resident secretary; more comprehensibly she turned a deaf ear to his pleadings for

the companionship of some gay young thing to ride and drive and walk with him and help him to pass the time. She protested when he suggested a change of scene, although he told her piteously that he could never be happy unless he were as free and independent as the birds of the air :

Francis used to run away from you too when he was in love ; and no one can be more deeply in love than I am with Lady Freedom.¹

Her epistolary style had not changed ; the more or less stereotyped answer to his affectionate reproaches generally ran on these lines :

He who has conceived such a suspicion of my loving, pure and noble heart ; who has brought his lack of feeling to such a pitch, and who has sunk so low as to write this to *me*, to *me*, may he find himself as lonely in his last hour, as I am in this.²

And yet the bond between them held ; they were grappled in an embrace so elemental that love and hatred were one. The Lucie of twenty years ago was *in extremis* ; overweening egotism was strangling her to death ; but she rallied at intervals. Sometimes for a blessed space she was her own kind, charming self again, and Pückler's generous nature made reconciliations easy. He was always ready to take a light tone. When she complained that he was a neglectful correspondent he told her, with truth, that probably not a single Prussian husband wrote so

¹ Unpublished ; letter from Pückler to Lucie ; dated from Dresden, May 23, 1842.

² Unpublished ; letter from Lucie to Pückler ; dated August 31, 1843.

many letters to his wife after the honeymoon, and ended gaily :

And now good-bye, *chère petite de quinze ans, insatiable de lettres*, cross-patch *au superlatif*, et vis-à-vis de laquelle ma patience angélique mérite le triple ciel.¹

Or again, after trying to make her see reason on the subject of her extravagance and unfair extortions :

Good-bye for the present, my good, but always confused old sheep.²

After the sale of Muskau, Lucie deliberately worked herself up into a state of frenzied self-pity, for which she certainly had some cause ; she wailed so incessantly that she had no roof to cover her head, and played the victim publicly and privately with so much persistence, that she strained his patience to the utmost :

. . . au jour du dernier jugement, s'il y a un tel jour, on me comptera pour beaucoup ce que j'ai fait pour vous dans cette vie. Avec mon caractère, et ma passion de liberté et d'indépendance, avec mon amour pour la raison et le bon sens cette tâche n'était pas sans difficulté.³

His love was still positive and capable of making sacrifices. He agreed unwillingly to live with Lucie at Branitz, for her complaints of being homeless touched

¹ Unpublished ; letter from Pückler to Lucie ; dated from Muskau, February 3, 1844.

² Unpublished ; letter from Pückler to Lucie ; dated from Muskau, March 5, 1844.

³ Unpublished ; letter from Pückler to Lucie ; dated from Dresden, April 11, 1845.

him in spite of himself, and her house in Berlin could naturally not supply the place of the Muskau castle. But it took a longer time to persuade him to begin planting at Branitz. He was afraid of the expense; terrified of bartering his hardly won liberty; and well aware of the heartbreaks which this barren region would cause him. He begged Lucie to let this cup pass from him. He told her that Branitz and emetics were synonymous for him; he implored her to grant him breathing-space; but she softened his heart by her sympathy over the episode with Rosa, during which she became her old magnanimous self. She also helped him like a true friend in the *imbroglio* with Lucie von Blücher. Filled with a sense of all he owed her, he resigned himself to this cross. He began to plant entirely for her sake, but he continued for his own. This meant the ruin of all comfort, for Lucie could not leave the artist in peace any more than the man. She interfered with his plans, she gave counter-orders, she flew into rages if he persisted in his own ideas, and irritated him to fever-pitch by her assertions that she was doing it all for him. In vain did he try what a little loving teasing would do:

In all civilised lands the law demands that a Schnucke should obey the Lou— . . . Schnucke, *je vous aime de tout mon cœur*.¹

It was probably no longer in Lucie's power to control her domineering instinct. Pückler began to see that she was incorrigible, and that she would never change.

¹ Unpublished; letter from Pückler to Lucie; dated from Branitz, May 12, 1847.

He proposed that she should rule alone over Branitz, and that he should live elsewhere independently, staying with her whenever she liked as a guest. The idea of losing her victim stung Lucie to take reprisals. After some desperate thinking, she wrote to inform him that she was leaving her town house to Adelheid in her will, with a clause to the effect that he might choose any objects he liked before her daughter took possession. As she had hoped and intended, this wounded him to the quick :

Would you have been capable of such a thought in the old days? To drive me away from the house we have shared together for so long, as soon as your eyes are closed? . . . Leave your daughter what you like of my things and your own ; but leave me at least in so great a sorrow as your death would be to me, the house which is dear to me, which one would scarcely take away from a servant who had devoted thirty years of his life to one's service ; let alone from a friend who has shown you, in spite of many ups and downs, a steady faithfulness which is probably rare. . . . And I am to select, as if I were a pedlar, what I want amongst those objects, nearly all of which I have brought myself from East and South with so much love, and always with you in my heart? ¹

There is a real sorrow in this lament compared with which her continual jeremiads certainly ring false :

Vous me faites inonder de larmes le court espace qui me sépare de la tombe ! ²

¹ Unpublished ; letter to Lucie from Pückler ; dated from Berlin, August 24, 1847.

² Unpublished ; letter to Pückler from Lucie ; dated from Dresden, October 9, 1847.

Their relations became less strained when Lucie settled in Dresden, in 1848, to escape from the revolutionary area. He was with her constantly, and was often constrained to abandon Branitz in the planting-time, cowed by her sentimental bullying. He would call her *marâtre*, and dub himself a henpecked husband, but he could not say her nay. He had a tormenting nightmare in 1848. Lucie had married again, he dreamt, and turned her face away from him in spite of his piteous pleadings. It was a long time, he added, waking unhappily, since she had loved him as she had used. He always longed for her when she was away from him and often felt remorse at his hasty temper; he even enjoyed a journey to Salzburg in her company in 1849 and as late as 1850 could still write to her thus:

. . . for not to have my Schnucke any more, let her be good or a cross-patch, to know that she had left the world for ever, is a thought which terrifies me much more than the thought of my own death.¹

But the perpetual strain of Lucie's scenes was beginning to harden his heart. There was obviously a long period during the year 1851 when they were completely estranged. A reconciliation on August 15 put an end to this state of affairs; she had looked so sweet with her white hair, Pückler wrote in his diary, that his heart was touched:

I have thought much on the subject of this curious and blessed crisis of the fifteenth. I recognize in it

¹ Unpublished; letter from Pückler to Lucie; dated from Branitz, April 23, 1850.

the external workings of a power for good, which melted a horrible crust of ice round my heart by a kind of miracle without apparent reason, and changed not only mine but the heart of the other entirely for the good, for the same evil hardening had begun there as well. *This is grace.* . . . May God preserve me the beneficial inner results of this day, that is my heartfelt prayer.¹

Reunited once more, poor Philemon and unhappy Baucis were able to smile through their tears :

Old as we are, we remain real children, who first kiss and love, then play and joke, then quarrel and throw their dolls at each other's heads ; finally weeping and loving, they make it up and are overcome with remorse.²

These gentler feelings continued for some time, but towards the end of the year they had a violent quarrel about money matters, during which she called him a liar, and he began to sign his letters "H. Pückler," or "H. P." But Lucie conquered herself again. She came to his aid in the affair with Marie von Hochstedt ; and when a slight stroke in September 1852 gave warning of her approaching decease, all her faults were forgotten. She was brought to Branitz, surrounded by every care and attention, petted, loved and nursed with the tenderest concern. She made a partial recovery, but what few controls she had had were gone. Peevish, irascible and querulous, she seriously upset and alarmed him by her violent

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, ix., pp. 299-300 ; diary of August 17, 1851.

² Unpublished ; letter from Pückler to Lucie ; dated from Hanover, September 21, 1851.

egotism ; whilst an even uglier side to her character manifested itself in cruel attempts to impoverish him by forcing him to pay large pensions to distant and indifferent connections. This line of conduct was informed by spite ; she wished to hurt his feelings and to make sure that he should not enjoy his life when she had gone ; she often very bitterly reproached him with the money he would inherit at her death. Such a state of mind is too abnormal not to make one pause and remember that her daughter Adelheid had died insane. Lucie never lost the use of her faculties, but her denaturalised love of self had pushed her over the edge of the world where emotions are sweet and thoughts are sane, and where others are allowed their place in the sun, into that darker region where self alone may flourish amidst the murderous devastation it has wrought. She was as much beyond the understanding of the normal as she was tragically beyond aid. Piteously, without one last appealing cry, love died within her, and egotism, that hydra-headed monster, possessed her inmost soul.

Her last intemperate manifestations killed Pückler's love as well. In a long and afflicting letter, dated from Coblenz, on December 7, 1853, he told her the whole truth of their relationship with a bitter resignation of spirit and with dispassionate despair. He showed her clearly how her love had diminished and finally disappeared :

Your words certainly remained much the same, but your actions took on a completely different complexion ; and if I forced myself again and again

to believe the first, although the slightest reflection convinced me of the contrary, this was due to my faithfully devoted heart, which always tries to believe blindly what it desires; all the more so, since I thought I had deserved your love entirely by the sacrifice of more than half my life.

He who considers that a man like me, with so wilful a character, and who loves freedom more than you do, has subjected himself for more than half his life, for nearly forty years, to your dominant influence, with the solitary exception of his seven years' journeys, and that this sacrifice verily entailed a continual effort and loving resignation; he who, I say, weighs all this, will certainly confess that it is not I who in our joint life gave the lesser pledges of affection or brought the lesser sacrifice. . . .

If you can be reasonable for once in your life, and truly devoted as you used to be, we shall meet again in the spring, and I shall come back to you with the old love; but if you remain stubborn, my long-established affection for my old Schnucke will certainly not cease, but I myself will never return. I shall seek in another continent the peace which has always fled me here, remaining to the end your Lou, but no longer your Lind.¹

It was in vain. Lucie was too far gone in self-delusion. Wild lamentations and terrible reproaches, references to her broken heart and her approaching end, poured forth in an hysterical flood; but not one word among the hundreds to show that she had a thought to spare for him. She took a copy of her ravings, and inscribing on his envelope, "Sentence of

¹ Unpublished; letter from Pückler to Lucie; dated from Coblenz, December 7, 1853. "Lind" was another pet name, meaning "Child."

death to a heart that once lived—the truest, tenderest affection,” fastened the two envelopes together with black sealing-wax. It was thus that I found them among his letters. Ludmilla Assing had not broken the seal. Lucie’s shaking handwriting caused me a pang of pity. The Nemesis of the loveless is dreadful indeed.

Pückler proceeded to Paris, whence he wrote frequently but coldly, pooh-poohing her prophecies of a speedy demise, for she had cried, “Wolf! wolf!” on this subject once too often. He refused to return to Branitz for the moment. He was clearly waiting for a more reasonable tone in her letters, but they did not alter, and whilst he was in Coblenz, on his way home, Lucie died alone in Branitz, on May 8, 1854. The “best action of his life,” as Pückler truly described his conduct towards his wife, had not been sustained to the end.

She had her deserts with a completeness which leaves little desire to condemn; nor is the ethical attitude towards such situations a fruitful one, since it is doubtful whether it lies in the power of human beings to change their natures by one jot or tittle; yet pity refuses to linger long by the side of this sentimental Fury who cuts but a sorry figure æsthetically, and has also outstayed her welcome grievously.

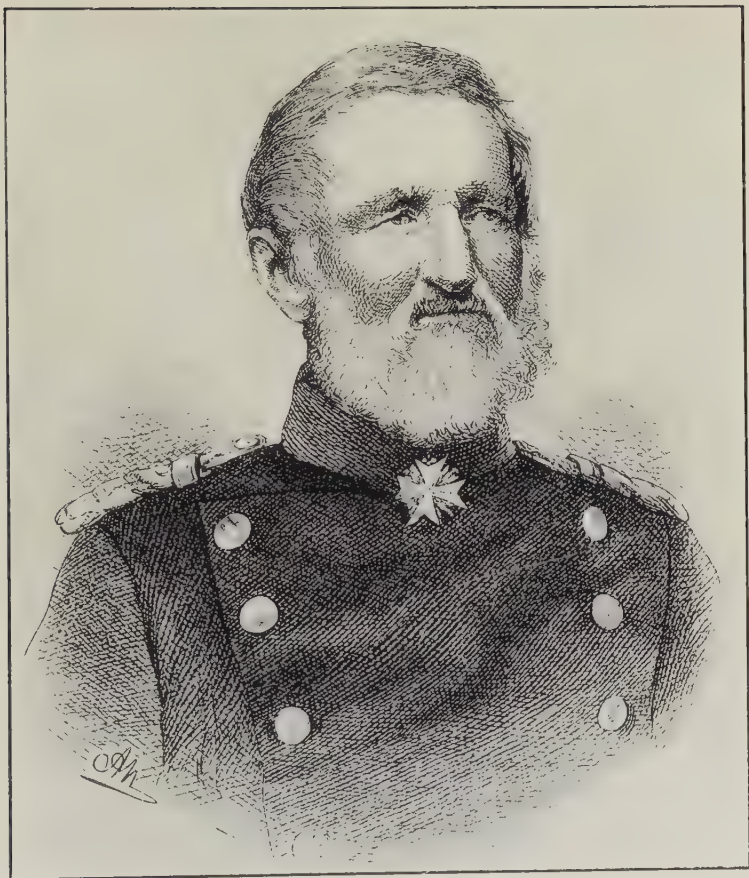
It is not possible to determine the precise nature of Pückler’s feelings when he heard of Lucie’s death. There is a gap in his journal between the years 1853 and 1859. He may have stopped writing, or a volume may have been destroyed by his orders, or by the pious hands of Ludmilla, who was quite capable of

this. His references to Lucie in answer to letters of condolence are curt, restrained, almost forbidding. He wrote to Billy Masser asking him for complete details of her death ; adding that it hurt him to think that she might have missed him and sorrowed over his absence in her last moments, and that it would be some comfort to know that this had not been the case. But the dwarf had been executing commissions for the Princess in Dresden while she lay dying ; he had no details to give.

* * *

Pückler had begun to dye his hair before he went to England in 1826, partly to increase his matrimonial chances, partly from personal vanity, although he always considered it a terrible nuisance, a black thread running through his life. It was then a long, delicate and even dangerous process, demanding at least twelve hours, often unsuccessful, and apt to leave the victim with a severe cold or a flayed skin. He hated the whole performance, it depressed and humiliated him ; but he disliked the appearance of age still more. Those who remain young in spirit will often be found rebelling and fretting when they are called upon to don the dingy livery of a master whose authority they do not own.

He abandoned the practice when he left Europe behind him, and resumed it with the utmost unwillingness at Lucie's instigation on his return. She clamoured for the rejuvenation of her handsome, ageless Lou. He protested that it only made him look ridiculous and deceived no one ; he implored her to let him off this irksome duty-service, which



PÜCKLER AS AN OLD MAN;

was far more complicated now that he had grown a beard. He was once nearly killed by suffocation during the operation, and often contracted alarming bronchial colds afterwards. But she would not be gainsaid, and he continued to comply, for there was a finish in every detail of his self-sacrifice which is particularly touching here. When Lucie went, the black thread was cut. Lou, with his dyed hair and his devoted heart, had vanished. A defiant and bewitching old magician had supplanted him, immune at last and for ever from the tyranny of love.

CHAPTER VI

THE "DEAD MAN"

WHEN Pückler returned from his tour round the British Isles, and re-read his voluminous letters to Lucie, he was so much struck by the interest of their subject-matter and style that the idea of publishing them leapt full grown into his mind. Lucie, too, was strongly of the opinion that they were far too good not to be communicated to a larger public. There seemed excellent reasons for keeping the authorship a secret even after the necessary omissions had been made; but some friends had already heard passages from the letters, and Varnhagen von Ense was one of the first to realise that behind the pseudonym of "a dead man" there lurked the lively personality of the mischievous Prince. The two men were already firm friends, united by their intellectual and political interests; and Rahel Varnhagen, who died in 1833, was also much drawn to the impressionable and gifted writer. The husband and wife set the tone in literary Berlin, a fortunate fact for Pückler, since Varnhagen appointed himself his literary sponsor and adviser from the first. The Prince trusted his literary tact completely, and sent him all his manuscripts to revise. Varnhagen was apt to be chary of censoring or correcting them, for fear of spoiling the freshness of the style; but he did

occasionally protect Pückler from his own recklessness, and always watched over his interests with remarkable zeal. By nature they were totally dissimilar. The one cautious, discreet, subtle and reserved; the other exuberant, impetuous and ardent; but there was a bond of no common liking between them, which stood the test of thirty long years and the strain of Varnhagen's fanatical liberalism in 1848. They always treated each other with a certain ceremony—Varnhagen, in particular, never forgot what he considered due to Pückler's rank—but their stately courtesies and grave compliments do not disguise their warm and even confidential relations. As soon as the first instalment of the *Letters from a Dead Man* appeared, in 1830, Varnhagen began to pull strings. He coaxed Heine into making a favourable mention of the author in the fourth volume of his *Reisebilder*, which included the *Englische Fragmente*. Heine, who had been in London himself in 1827, although the poet and the Prince had not met, light-heartedly did what he was asked without troubling to read the work in question; and furthermore quoted Pückler on Byron as the motto of his book. He read these "posthumous letters" later, enjoyed them considerably, and referred to them again with praise in *Französische Zustände*. But a mightier voice was raised to the glorification of the fortunate author—the organ of Johann Wolfgang Goethe. Pückler had met him on at least two occasions; he described with due reverence an interview in Weimar on the outward journey. The sage had complimented him on his gardening, and held out hopes that he might one day visit him

in Muskau. They had also discussed Sir Walter Scott and Lord Byron, a conversation reported by the Prince with flattering awe. All this was to appear in the third volume, for Pückler published the two instalments of his books in inverse chronological order for some freakish reason of his own. The compliments he paid to Goethe had nothing to do with the extremely appreciative review which the poet gave to the first and second volumes. It was again Varnhagen who approached the great man, brought the book to his notice, belauded the author, and had the satisfaction of seeing a truly princely tribute follow his own elaborate analysis in the *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik*. One way and another, the stir caused by these anonymous letters in Germany was quite as great as the sensation made a few years earlier by Heine's *Reisebilder*; and indeed everyone pointed eagerly to the obvious resemblances between them: the liveliness, the wit, the sentimentality, and the self-revelations. Not all these voices were uplifted in praise. Pückler's liberal views and his stringent criticisms of the Prussian reactionary policy aroused wrath and uneasiness in high places. Others — and Börne was one of these — could not forgive him for being a prince; for the veil of anonymity was a thin one, and soon pierced by discerning eyes. England was never in doubt for a moment as to the authorship of the letters, which had been rendered into excellent English by Sara Austin and prefaced by extracts from Goethe's review. Returning with this flourish of trumpets to the land of their birth, they attracted the attention of all the leading literary

journals; indeed, very few papers were content to ignore the *Tour of a German Prince*, although fewer still were edified by his performance.

The *Quarterly*¹ hit out straight from the shoulder in the good old-fashioned slashing style:

. . . we establish at once the identity of Goethe's "unprejudiced traveller," and a "right-minded" and "decorous" terminator of *affaires de cœur*—of whom many of our readers have had some personal knowledge—and whose imposing moustachios are still fresh in our own recollection. . . .

Ten pages of stupid blasphemy bring us to page 88, where the baser propensities of his mind give place to its overweening passion—personal vanity. The hero of "moral manifestations" thus confides to his dear princess the conquest he has made of a barmaid at Bangor. . . .

We hope the Lady Janes and Lady Marys, who waltzed and galloped with this "thoroughly illustrious" prince—their fathers, whose wines he drank—and their brothers, whose horses he rode,—will not forget this passage, in case his "noble and prepossessing aspect" should again chance to enlighten our "insular gloom." [The passage here referred to is an allusion to the *English brutality* in making love.]

The *Edinburgh*² had led the way, although in a rather more decorous style, mingling some not very glowing praise with stern moral censure at the

¹ *Quarterly Review*, London, xlv., pp. 518-544, January 1832; not signed.

² *Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal*, liv., pp. 384-407, December 1831; not signed.

betrayal of the sanctity of family life, of which the author had been guilty in some of his revelations :

We should like to be present at the next reception of this *gentleman*, (we refer him to his own definition of the word,) in Galway or Kerry. A few more examples of the kind would close every door against an uncertificated foreigner, (even though he were a titular Prince,) and turn the line of abstract suspicion—of which he was made aware—into one of direct quarantine prohibition. . . . Does he think the German Prince, who travelled in England in 1828, so impeccable that no scandal got whispered abroad concerning him? . . . [And referring to his opinion of Englishwomen :] The ignorance and the audacity of it, (from a German, too, of all people,) are inconceivable.

The *New Monthly Magazine*¹ was favourable on the whole, but could not forbear making the following apt comment :

We pass over another little criticism, equally rapid and sweeping, in which we are told that "Byron is our second poet, (for after Shakespeare, the palm is surely his)"; by informing Prince Pückler Muskau, that in English literature there is yet extant one John Milton, whom we are not quite disposed to see thus suddenly thrust down—will his Highness tell us to what grade of celebrity?

The *Monthly Review*² was laudatory, if rather colourless. The *Foreign Quarterly*,³ whilst exclaiming,

¹ *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, London, xxxii., pp. 500-506, 1831; signed "B. E."

² *Monthly Review*, London, iii., pp. 579-598, 1831; not signed.

³ *Foreign Quarterly Review*, London, ix., pp. 290-312, 1832; according to an annotated copy in the British Museum, this article was by Charles Buller, Jun., Esq.; Pückler attributed it to Romilly.

as nearly everyone did, at the exaggerated praise from Goethe, allowed the author to be "a man of very considerable talents" and of "amiable honest feeling"; but the reviewer confessed himself at a loss to account for the fact that the book should have become an object of such vehement praise and abuse as it had received; or why it should be defended or attacked by all the reviews, magazines and newspapers in turn. He blamed the writer for the *Quarterly* most severely for "the accusation of indecency fastened on every passage in which the disgusting pruriency of his imagination can find a peg for a smutty insinuation"; proving thereby that if his own mind was less disgusting, his language was no more restrained. The *Westminster*¹ was frankly delighted and refreshingly sympathetic; the reviewer declared that the name "Prince Pückler Muskau" was fit for a fairy tale, a remarkable piece of originality, for as a rule it was considered the most absurd thing about him, and distortions such as "Prince Pickling Mustard" the essence of wit. John Sterling's appellation, however, was pertinent enough:

I have been reading the travels of that Prince Prettyman, to whose book you have shown so much more favour than you would have bestowed on the author [he wrote grimly but in all innocence to Sara Austin]. . . . I do not deny that your *protégé*, the Prince, is rather lively, and perhaps as things go in Germany a good deal of a gentleman, in spite of his bad waltzing; but his utter ignorance of the literature, morals, politics, and religion of

¹ *Westminster Review*, London, xvi., pp. 226-243, January 1832; not signed.

England is ill-compensated by some dashing sketches of scenery, and by his wearisome descriptions of the manners of a small knot of people who, as far as I ever saw, were despicable and ridiculous in the eyes of the great body of their more decent countrymen. The most disgraceful part of the business is Goethe's praise of the Tourist. You do not admire or respect him, but the ablest German since Luther, or at least since Leibnitz, does both. . . .¹

Meanwhile what was Prince Prettyman about in the intervals of carrying on his erotic correspondence with Sara Austin? Playing an entrancing game of make-believe, and pretending to be an author. This fascinating sport accounted for much of his energy and time during the years 1829-1835. Indeed he produced five books in fourteen volumes during this period,² no mean performance for a man-about-town with the cares of an estate on his hands as well.

He set to work by providing himself with all those charming accessories, complete to the smallest detail, which are so important a part of play. He retired to his shooting-lodge in the solitude of the forest, and furnished a study-bedroom which was a veritable author's dream. A romantic fireplace, a foot and a half above the ground, threw picturesque illuminations on the walls; and four writing-tables were grouped in the spacious room, ready to fulfil his every need. There was first and foremost the

¹ Janet Ross, *Three Generations of Englishwomen*, London, 1888, i., pp. 69-71; letter from John Sterling, dated from Colonia, Cape St Vincent, July 9, 1832.

² *Briefe eines Verstorbenen*, 4 vols., 1830-1831; *Tutti Frutti*, 5 vols., 1834; *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnererei*, 1 vol., 1835; *Jugendwanderungen*, 1 vol., 1835; *Semilasso*, 3 vols., 1835.

author's table, at which he generally stood to write his books; then a desk for the duplicating machine he had bought in England, for he now began to take copies of his letters, as befits a celebrity; the third was devoted to everyday business, and on the fourth lay his diary, no longer a haphazard collection of descriptions and reflections, but a repository of important notes. A dressing-table with toilet paraphernalia, and a comfortable bed, suggested lordly airs and graces and Bohemian ways. In these appropriate surroundings he proceeded to turn night into day, having carefully dressed for the part. Clad in some eccentric but becoming dressing-gown, he wrote busily from eleven at night until five in the morning; he then ate what he was pleased to call dinner, rode for an hour or two over his estate; slept a little, drank tea at nine o'clock in the evening, and so to work again. Excellent cigars at his elbow, a head bursting with things to say, and Europe straining to catch every word; what more could an author want?

The startling success of the *Letters from a Dead Man* went to his head like wine; he did not accept the exaggerated opinion of his talent, but having captured the attention of the public he determined to make the fickle creature listen and listen again whilst his vogue lasted. It would not last long, he felt sure; but meanwhile he would unburden his mind, parade his grievances, air his reflections, and play an enthralling game with the many-headed monster who had been delivered into his hands. He would startle and sting and flatter and soothe as he

wove his fancies; he would scandalise and mystify and entertain; he would tease and tickle and charm, and remain the talk of two continents for a year or two at least. As he turned his phrases and tossed off his pages, at light-hearted speed, he sniffed with humorous rapture the incense which hung in clouds round his head, and mingled with the leaping fire and the fantastic shadows to inspire his midnight thoughts.

A view-hallo in the Press; cries of bravo and shame; the royal family in Berlin on the alert; England buzzing like a hive of angry bees; France in fits of laughter; America bawling applause; his first book known already in Turkey and in Greece; the educated public in Scandinavia in raptures; a voice from the distant past: "Non et décidément non vous n'êtes pas mort, au contraire vous êtes plus disposé à être immortel"¹; thus the spicy, aromatic smoke curled upwards, causing a wicked smile.

His *macabre* pseudonym gave him full scope for irony and wit; it also suggested all manner of mystifications and ended in a thrilling game of hide-and-seek with the public and the critics. As soon as he was named as the author he made a feint of dropping his incognito and confessing to his identity. But at the last moment he confused the issue again by vowing that someone else was impersonating him; declaring that he, no less than the bewildered reviewers, was the victim of a wild half-brother

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagelücher*, vii., p. 303; letter to Pückler from his cousin the Countess of Kielmansegg; dated from Pöding, August 20, 1830.

who might, or who might not, be dead. The ghost-author was then abandoned, and Semilasso, *blasé*, impertinent and Byronic, took his place, teased the readers unmercifully throughout eight volumes and finally disappeared most mysteriously in circumstances which hinted at his demise. Prefaces and postscripts by the editor, the president of the Society for Propagating Innocent Books in M . . . u, were further calculated to annoy. Herr von Rosenberg now made a sudden appearance, raving in a most romantic manner, and with the strangest tales to tell; whilst the editor, Wolf O'Guardthee, protested that he was nothing but the chief actor in a puppet-show of which he, the editor, pulled the strings. So the game went on until 1841, although none of the later pseudonyms were used with any intent to deceive. Pückler was far too much amused by his success to wish to repudiate his works seriously; but the temptation to infuriate the critics and to amuse the public and himself was irresistible, and the pretended anonymity remained for ten years one of his favourite toys.

Long before this, the game of writing had changed its character. The trees would toss and sway outside the hunting-lodge, murmuring and whispering to themselves. His eyes often strayed lovingly towards them; one day they widened and darkened; then he took up the pen with a different expression; it had become a divining-rod for gold. From this moment he took his authorship in a soberer spirit, and spared himself even less than before. He turned his lively talent into hard cash with so much energy

and industry that one wonders how he could have stood the strain. The relief to be earning money at last naturally increased his enthusiasm for a time, and indeed it upheld him for many years; but the first rapture of authorship was soon a thing of the past, although he never quite lost the pleasurable feeling of communication with a large public. He went through the normal and not altogether uplifting reactions of the professional writer, producing books at an unconscionable rate, not because he would, but because he must. When the spell was upon him he wrote with enjoyment, shutting himself up for weeks on end, and experiencing an illusory inspiration as he recounted his adventures and evoked the beauties of nature. But when the mood was over he looked at the results with unaffected disdain. He was too truly an artist to care for his own books, even if the praise which he received in such full measure flattered his personal vanity. His modesty was deeply rooted in knowledge; the creator of Muskau was competent to judge, and his judgment was adverse. He called his books by hard names: they were botches and pot-boilers, he declared; with the exception of some passages and chapters he considered them beneath contempt. There were times when the very thought of writing was distasteful to him; but the habit had been formed and had hold of him for many years. It provided him with a creative outlet when he was absent from his estate; it was also a channel of personal communication; but the main reason why he continued to write was financial, and he stuck to



VIEW NEAR THE HUNTING LODGE.

it with commendable perseverance long after it had ceased to be a mere amusement.

He always chose his writing-stations with care, for he still relied on the stimulating adjuncts which had been a part of the game: an inn in the Pyrenees; the quarantine hospital in Malta; a tent in the desert; above all, the witching hours of midnight, the elaborate *mise-en-scène*. *Semilasso* (3 vols., 1835); *Semilasso in Afrika* (5 vols., 1836); *Der Vorläufer* (1 vol., 1838); *Südöstlicher Bildersaal* (3 vols., 1840-1841); these were all written and sent to press during his journeys. *Aus Mehemet Ali's Reich* (3 vols., 1844) was also largely composed in Egypt, although he finished it in Europe after his return. *Die Rückkehr* (3 vols., 1846-1848) was written up from his journals in Branitz, and was the only one of all his books over which he burnt no midnight oil. His "iron industry" was rewarded by the largest publishers' cheques any author had yet commanded in Germany, with the single exception of Goethe at the very end of his life. It was sweetened by his persisting and increasing fame, which he relished none the less because it was always accompanied by vituperation. As late as 1837 he declared that writing was at once a terrible *corvée* and one of his greatest pleasures. In 1838 he spoke of it as an infamous passion, akin to drunkenness, which had him in its grip and yet disgusted him. It was Lucie who finally cured him of the disease, if it was one. Much more sensitive and timid on the subject of his reputation than he was himself, she censored the manuscripts he sent home to her, robbing them of

all their flavour, he asserted. She also delayed the publication of *Südöstlicher Bildersaal*, when Jäger finally delivered it, for she was terrified at the idea of publishing this particular book. Pückler was convinced that his readers would lose all interest in him unless he were continually before their eyes. He had worked like a navvy to keep in touch with them, and this external brake applied to the headlong rapidity of his production discouraged him so much that he gave up writing in Asia Minor, swearing that he would never take up the pen again. But he was stimulated by the success of *Südöstlicher Bildersaal* to complete the account of his travels after his return to Germany. It was done rather languidly, and without much pleasure, but it was done. He was now really played out, and had no more to say. He had written books for twenty years, and was unfeignedly glad to stop.

His world-wide reputation was no more remarkable than the celebrity which he enjoyed nearer home. Not a newspaper, not a literary journal in Germany but was for ever occupied with his books, with his personality, with his exploits and with his parks. Jäger's brother wrote his biography in 1843; Petzold, his former park inspector, published a book on the Prince and the park of Muskau in 1856. He had fired the imagination of his contemporaries. Who was the Count P. in Hoffmann's tale, *Das öde Haus*? Who was the parcomaniac in Tieck's ironical story, *Der Jahrmarkt*? Who was the original of Ungern-Sternberg's satire called *Tutu*? Who was in Laube's thoughts as he delineated the character of Francis I. in *Die Gräfin Chateaubriand*? Who inspired

Immermann to caricature a fantastical aristocratic traveller under the name of Münchhausen, and to transform him into an incredible liar? Who looked over Ida Hahn-Hahn's shoulder as she feverishly wrote *Sybille*? Pückler, Pückler-Muskau, Pückler, Pückler-Muskau, Pückler-Muskau and Pückler again. He was constantly appearing in the literature of the day. Fouqué's wife described him in one of her novels; Stéphanie Tacher, the Duchess of Dino and many others portrayed him in their Memoirs. Herwegh apostrophised him wrathfully in *Gedichte eines Lebendigen*; Laube sketched him enthusiastically in his *Erinnerungen*; Gutzkow sneered at him in *Der jüngste Anacharsis*; Börne annihilated him in *Menzel der Franzosenfresser*; "Homogalakto" (probably Koreff) wrote *Reminiscenzen für Semilasso*; Thiersch made him the subject of a would-be crushing archæological attack; Leveson-Gower wrote a skit on the *German Prince*; Dumas considered him an interesting study. Books and articles appeared with his pseudonym which were not by his hand. There were *Military Letters by a Dead Man*; there were *Memoirs of a Dead Man*; there were *Six Stories from the Papers of a Dead Man*, and so forth and so on. Heine dedicated *Lutezia* to Prince Pückler-Muskau in a graceful and almost affectionate manner; Bettina laid Goethe's *Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde* at his feet; Laube followed suit with his *Liebesbriefe*; Mundt with the second volume of *Dioskuren*. It was one long chorus of howls of derision and hymns of praise, a never-ending literary *claque*, and all to the intention of a dead man.

A sobering thought undoubtedly that his fame should have vanished completely when Pückler disappeared from the world, leaving his books behind. Was it an entirely meretricious success which depended solely on his personality? A dispassionate critic must confess that, with all his gifts, amongst them the gift of writing; in spite of the wealth of a peculiarly many-sided and original temperament; notwithstanding a strong creative force working along æsthetic lines, his books cannot be classed with the literature of the world. They have had their day; they satisfied an emotional need in his contemporaries which was only slightly connected with art. It is the special function of light literature to open the merciful door of illusion to those hunted mortals who seek to escape from the realities of life; this accounts for the mysterious power of the second-rate and the *faux-bon* in art even over eminent minds. The tremendous vogue of *Ossian*; the almost incredible popularity of the romances of chivalry in Europe; the voracity with which the German public devoured the preposterous *Robinsonaden* — all this tends to prove that books which are worthless as products of art often correspond to a deep-seated psychological need, which perhaps only they can supply. *The Family Herald* has opened the door of romance for many a little kitchen maid crouching over the fire on a Saturday night; university professors devour detective fiction which creates a legendary world of criminal heroes who know not academic calm; respectable city fathers chuckle delightedly over dissolute memoirs depicting manners

and morals poles apart from their irreproachable private lives; the middle classes love tales of the nobility, and some spinsters read love stories all day; whilst unwilling stay-at-homes, pursuing the even tenor of an uneventful existence, may turn to tales of travel and adventure to soothe their longing for a similar life.

The works of Pückler-Muskau made an immediate appeal to this large class of readers. If they do nothing else they certainly evoke something of the fascination of far countries, and the figure of an enterprising traveller freed from the shackles of convention and obeying no laws but his own. They had for his own contemporaries the emotional value of difference, but they leave posterity untouched. The light literature which dazzles one generation will rarely appeal to the next. The demand changes in externals with the material conditions of existence and the altered spiritual outlook. Pückler's travels and adventures cannot compare with the expeditions to the Polar regions in our day, with the achievements of Lawrence in Arabia, with the romance of McGovern's entry into Tibet, or with the almost fabulous experiences of Ossendowski. Travelling on a large scale has become much more common and much easier; the glamour has faded from Pückler's books, the mystery has vanished in part.

There remains surely that brilliance of style to which Ludmilla Assing and even more grudging critics constantly refer? He has a certain natural and intimate charm. He writes fluently and graphically, here and there vividly and with real feeling,

but often trivially, using and abusing French and other foreign words and phrases in a manner which disfigures his style. In spite of some moments of greatness he does not appear to-day to possess the quality of brilliance. Nor is he even consistently interesting. If the truth must be told, he succeeds at times in being downright boring, especially when indulging in those interminable reflections on religion, which the reader soon begins to dread, and ends by longing to skip. For religion as a conversational subject is hardly more popular nowadays than golf. Whether players or not, we cannot throw ourselves with any real enthusiasm into the glories and disasters of Jones's progress round the course, and Smith's conception of the universe leaves us equally cold. It needs a remarkable mind indeed to touch on the subject of religion and not to become platitudinous, or worse. Blasphemy has often a certain piquancy; but the earnest seeker after truth and the honest doubter so much beloved by clergymen would be well advised, if they aspire to social success or literary fame, to seek and doubt in silence and alone. Pückler-Muskau was intensely interested in religion; but although original and independent of mind here as elsewhere, he was neither a Pascal nor a Dostoyevski, and arouses all those feelings of intellectual boredom and distaste which most of us associate with sermons. His political, economic and statistical considerations are also not in themselves very entertaining; and since the more interested he felt the more long-winded he became, the reader at times begins to despair.

As a descriptive writer he is a failure on the whole. He saw nature with the eye of the landscape-gardener, and his descriptions of English parks, notably of Warwick Castle, are admirably effective; but the same *technique* applied to untamed nature resulted in set descriptions which are often too long and detailed to give a clear impression. When his emotions were strongly aroused he could at times express himself in an arresting and an almost dramatic manner; one sees what he saw then, and may even catch one's breath.

Such moments, and they are rare, occur most frequently when Pückler was contemplating the sea. He loved it, even whilst fearing it much as Odysseus feared it of old; he could never be dissuaded from a voyage however perilous it might be, embarking with exultation to meet his natural foe, who challenged the last reserves of his courage and wrestled with his inmost spirit in a mortal and mystical embrace. With such feelings as these to inspire them it is not surprising that the sea-pieces of this landscape-gardener should have a more stirring quality than his pictures of ruins, mountains, forests, sunsets and starlit nights. And again in the silence of waste spaces or beholding titanic monuments he sometimes touched the same chord. Ireland, Thebes, the sea and the desert; wildness, greatness, tempests and eternal solitudes found a not unworthy expression in his books.

When observing men and manners he is always fresh, spirited and entertaining. English lords, Irish ne'er-do-wells, French peasants, Turkish desperadoes, Arab chiefs—he was profoundly interested in them

all. Rulers, murderers, monks and madmen were all grist to his mill. His wide sympathies, his keen curiosity, his sense of humour and clear insight make such character-sketches eminently readable; he is always worth listening to when he deserts nature, religion, politics and economics for human beings. Excessively subjective, he was also at great pains to portray himself as accurately as possible; but he succeeds only partially in communicating his vital spirit, a failure all the more disappointing because he plays so large a part in his books, which are all autobiographical. To compare him in this respect with a Marie Bashkirtseff or a Barbellion is to become aware that there was some insurmountable barrier between Pückler-Muskau and his public.

It was not due to a native incapacity on his part. His extant letters, which fill between forty and fifty capacious box-files, not counting his diaries and journals, show that he had the power of self-expression in a possibly unparalleled degree. He was not one of those letter-writers who, like Madame de Sévigné, mould intimate personal experiences into exquisite artistic form, looking perhaps beyond the immediate recipient to a larger public or impelled by art for art's sake. The value of his correspondence lies in the forcible directness of a remarkable personality. Even his published letters make a startling impression of intimate contact, and his complete correspondence is possibly unique in this respect. It offers a rare and disturbing experience—the sheer, stark disclosure of a human soul. Nothing is extenuated or hidden, nothing is magnified or diminished; there are no

softened outlines nor becoming perspectives, but the bewildering, the overpowering, the unadulterated truth. He was as incapable of dissimulation as of shame when writing to a friend : he must speak out ; he must express his every mood ; he must communicate the facts of his life and the fancies of his mind. This is particularly noticeable when he is addressing Lucie, with whom he was on terms of intimacy which have probably rarely existed in a like degree between two human beings. Many of his letters to her are almost staggering in their emotional intensity, and the cumulative effect is such that it becomes difficult to resume one's own identity after an hour or two with him. It has dwindled into insignificance beneath his powerful searchlight. Not only was his capacity for feeling much stronger than that of the common run of men, it was also markedly dynamic. It drove him into action, or forced words from his throat which make the reader a victim at second hand : torrential phrases, rhythmic lamentations, beseeching cadences, the dying fall of regret ; it is the naked structure of poetry stripped of all conscious aim, informed with the unerring instinct of the somnambulist or the inspiration of the possessed. In lighter moods he could be extremely lively and witty ; freakish, gossiping and confiding ; engagingly childish at times and often unrepentantly in the confessional. Reticences, discretions, inhibitions he had none.

If Pückler gave full play to his moods with Lucie, whom he regarded as his second self, he was so sensitive to the atmosphere proceeding from others

that he was apt to identify himself with his correspondent in a manner clearly reflected in his style. His letters to Varnhagen are decorous and courteous; those to Bettina eccentric and capricious; to Laube he wrote with rough-and-ready friendliness; teasingly, caressingly or cruelly to his mother, protectively to Macbuba, haughtily to Wittgenstein, romantically to Ida Hahn-Hahn, and chivalrously to Heine. Unluckily nearly all his love-letters have been destroyed; the epistles which remain are disconcertingly candid and startlingly matter-of-fact. Nevertheless it is possible to gauge the degree of virtue possessed by the recipient by the tone he adopted towards her. This responsiveness is but another manifestation of his incorruptible sincerity; it could be turned outward as well as inward, but in either case, harnessed as it was to the impelling force of his emotions, it resulted in a style whose convincing and at times ruthless realism rends the veil from his spirit and reveals his inmost self.

What Ludmilla did for Pückler after his death the author had done for the man during his lifetime; a fact which, while it needs some fortitude to endure, can at least be justified on practical grounds. In the *Letters from a Dead Man* he, too, mangled, edited and distorted his text. The result was a not altogether undeserved success, but it wrings the heart of his biographer. The letters to Lucie languish in their box-files in Berlin; the posthumous productions to "Julie" may be read in any library of repute and in every European language. They are only too truly posthumous indeed, for the author has given

up the most vital part of the ghost. They are lively if you will, confidential, intimate, even daring; but they have been tricked out and tampered with. Bowdlerised, asterisked, initialled, they now resemble painted lilies and roses that have been rouged. Some incidents have fig leaves, some stories have no names. Let the reviewers cry out against betrayals, the biographer cannot but regret most bitterly the reserves and suppressions, cannot but lament, deplore and bewail the literary aim. The natural charm of his style is not absent from these carefully edited letters, but it is sadly dimmed; the sparkle is less spontaneous, the champagne is decidedly flat.

As a description of England under George IV. this book may pass muster on the whole, and is still historically interesting to-day. But as a piece of autobiography—and it certainly claims to be such—it sins gravely by omission against emotional truth. Innumerable little incidents which reveal Pückler's lovable faults and foibles have been obliterated either from vanity or from *respect humain*. But these are only trifles; the outstanding exclusion is the inevitable silence on the subject of his main emotional preoccupation in London. The exquisite comedy of his matrimonial schemes has vanished; the underlying tragedy (his desperate financial position and the anguish which it caused him on account of Lucie and Muskau) has also disappeared. The very fact of publication spelt disaster here. Emotional truth is transmuted into the poetic truth of art; it leaps naked to the eyes from the faded ink of a letter written it matters not how many years ago; but it

has no place in this hotchpotch of nature and art: letters to a private correspondent, rewritten for the public at large.

This explanation will not cover Pückler's failure to project his brilliant and fascinating personality in his subsequent books, since they were conceived from the outset with a view to publication. It must be granted that the twenty-nine volumes which make up his published works give many interesting details about the author's life and mind. They reflect his impetuosity, childishness and vanity; they give proof of his courage and determination; they reveal his superstitions and his deistic eighteenth-century beliefs; they show most charmingly the passionate sympathy he felt for animals; they are often eloquent on the subject of nature and the delights of adventure. His epicurean philosophy of life and his knowledge of the world become apparent. He dwells on his archæological interests, his gastronomical principles, his medical remedies, and lovingly on every detail of his travelling equipment. He is seen in many different relationships, among all sorts and conditions of men, in many a strange predicament, but never openly in love. He speaks about women at times; there is occasionally an allusion to some particular charmer, now and then a hint of a warmer interest, but there is little indeed to show what a large part women played in his life and what a conquering part he played in theirs. It is impossible for instance to detect the catastrophic influence of Henriette Sontag in the *Letters from a Dead Man*, whilst the references to Macbuba in his last books

conceal with consummate skill their real relations and his true feelings. Writing autobiographically and in the first person for twenty years, he yet suppressed his emotional adventures, telling, although with much clear-sightedness and vividness, never more than half the truth. He could have left behind him a human document of the greatest interest and probably one of real poetic value :

Je pense qu'indépendamment de vos voyages, vous écrivez un peu vos mémoires, n'est-ce pas ? Qu'ils doivent être amusants, à part même les choses, que vous ne direz jamais. Ce mariage fait et rompu d'une manière si romanesque, tant d'amours si gracieusement trahis, tant de folies nobles et généreuses, tant de crimes charmants ! ce sera le monument le plus curieux de l'époque.¹

Alas, it was never written, although his letters prove that he was more than capable of such a task and strongly desired to undertake it. There must have been some powerful motive which caused him to refrain.

It cannot have been any feeling of shame, for he was entirely free from this quality ; his conduct with women appeared to him on the whole perfectly natural and justifiable. He lived in an age which thought very much as he did. He need not therefore fear to shock others, and was certainly not shocked at himself. But however leniently the society of his day regarded passionate excesses, the world to which Pückler belonged by birth still held that

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, i., p. 38 ; letter from Sophie Gay to Pückler ; dated from Paris, July 6, 1833.

the name and the fame of the women involved must be protected at all costs.

A rigid covenant of silence was the latter-day interpretation of the chivalrous ideal. Those men whose traditional duty it was to protect women, and who felt instinctively that women were their lawful prey, reconciled the irreconcilable by secrecy to the death. Nor was this rank hypocrisy; for men, unlike women, have no inborn spiritual conviction that innocence can be destroyed by an external act. In the days of chivalry the true knight, under the influence of Christian asceticism, adopted this conviction, and did not disdain the virtue of chastity. He rode forth to conquer others, but he also conquered himself, thereby protecting the fragile virtue of women from the last and greatest risk. But the cost proved too high in the end. Gradually, under the pressure of necessity, the focus shifted. The reputation and not the virtue of women came to be guarded as the vulnerable point. Chivalry once meant continence, and was symbolised by a naked sword; in Pückler's day it meant silence, the symbol of a vanished ideal.

Such symbols have often a strangely compelling power. The deep and misleading silence which Pückler maintained about women in his books is an impressive manifestation of the strength of tradition and birth. Only the vulgar will boast of conquests, it is true; but there is a great difference between refraining from bragging and his achievement in producing twenty-nine volumes of autobiographical matter which successfully conceal so large a part of his real life. Although entirely free from conceit,

he was inordinately vain ; and if anything can gratify that insatiable passion it is to appear before the eyes of the world as a being beloved of the opposite sex. But he denied himself this gratification, he who so rarely denied himself anything. It might be argued that he was too much taken up in experiencing these adventures to write about them, and it is probably true that it is more difficult not to crow when the event is rare ; but when one considers how imperative was his need to express himself, it must be granted that the breeding which never deserted him and the chivalry which was not always present in his dealings with women united here to form an impassable barrier to the self-revelation for which he craved.

Plain speech was therefore denied to Pückler, but romantic writers discover in the symbolical method a substitute for naked facts. The dead man had a strongly romantic element in his nature ; it runs like a thread through the labyrinth of his literary work, leading along serpentine paths into blind alleys, through intricate meanderings and sharp turnings to the heart of the maze, a temple to a goddess at whose shrine he was rarely known to kneel.

Fragile and unstable, sensibility depends upon a mood. It would sometimes come to Pückler through love, but he was generally unsentimental and sensual with women ; it often came to him through nature. There is an imaginative quality in his rendering of the scenery in the wilder parts of Ireland which is not to be found elsewhere in the *Letters from a Dead Man* — a suggestion of elemental spirits, a local

pixy-tale: the legendary wild huntsman, a mermaid summoned from the sea by the piper's magic notes, towering hills and wine-dark lakes — romance is in the air. In *Tutti Frutti* the sight of a magnificent castle in beautiful surroundings falling into decay suggested the fantastic invention of the robber-lord, Herr von Lork: two typical instances of a process which often went on in his mind; the presence of nature, wild and beautiful, conjuring up the romantic mood, resulting at times in eloquent and even haunting passages, at times in an imaginary tale.

When a romantic feels the creative urge he looks within himself. Pückler's stories are all subjective: symbolical representations of the intense emotional life he had banished from his autobiographical writings. His first essay in this field is to be found in *Tutti Frutti*, in the tale of Mischling. It opens with rather laboured irony, becomes more wildly romantic every moment, and ends in the death of the heroine, which has a profound spiritual effect on the hero-villain. The faithless Mischling, having hesitated for some time between two women, the one as pure as an angel, the other as wicked as sin, makes a final fatal choice, and is then overcome by a passion of remorse which is most uncomfortably real. Pückler was feeling his way towards a method of self-expression which should be guiltless of betrayals. Giannina, who sacrificed her life for her cruel lover, may or may not have been a cipher standing for Lucie's power of devotion. Aline, irresistible and unscrupulous, was certainly endowed with the physical charms of Henriette Sontag, notably with her wonderful

eyes ; but her wicked heart was a poetic licence, symbolising perhaps the disaster she had brought into Pückler's life, or possibly merely the outward and visible sign of his inward victory. But the likeness to both women is wilfully obscured ; the story is completely improbable, the invention of an *amateur* in writing and of a *connoisseur* in mystification. This fantastically disguised piece of autobiography reveals no sensational secrets. Mischling is Pückler, and meant to be recognised ; he had suffered greatly at the hands of one woman and caused intense pain himself to another, but there is nothing more to be learned of the women in the case. He had expressed his misery and relieved it, and nobody's reputation was one penny the worse, except, perchance, his own.

Echoes from the same episode are also heard in *The Plague*—a story attributed to a Polish officer—and in *The Dream*—communicated as from himself—both in the fourth volume of *Semilasso in Afrika*. They are short fantasies containing incredible happenings, in reality distorted reminiscences from the past, bubbling up from the dark waters of romance amidst weird African ruins and illimitable sands. Music, magic and a duel ; memories of Sophie Gay in a love-lorn trance and of the prophecies of Lenormand ; a dream, the plague and a warning ; a wild and wicked cousin, clearly the author himself—all these elements are held in the solution of his passion for the German singer, still the most disturbing experience he had known, and make their incongruous appearance in a book devoted to travels and demonstrable facts.

At the end of the fifth volume of *Semilasso in Afrika* there is another and a more convincing dream. As he lay ill of the fever in Tunis, Pückler remembered the little chameleon which he had left behind on the roadside. In his dream it became transformed into a beloved woman, whom he was called upon to relinquish because she belonged to a friend. The real sorrow in these few pages shows that the affair was quite as serious as he described it to be in his letters to Lucie. The parting from the Englishwoman in Tunis caused him a piercing regret, manifest in his dream. His previous conduct with her also occasioned remorse, which found an expression in the first volume of *Südöstlicher Bildersaal*.

This book opens with a startlingly well-written preface, a lyrical invocation to the mighty sorcerer called phantasy, whose kingdom knows no bounds, and with whose passport the author journeys through distant lands. The wild and desolate scenery of Kurbo was a solvent for the mood of romance. The first part of this volume is fascinating to read; it contains a strange autobiographical confession in which dual personality plays a fantastic part. Graf Erdmann, the eccentric and ambiguous stranger whom the author meets at Kurbo, gradually discloses himself to the reader as none other than Pückler himself, who is also present in his own person under the name of Herr von Rosenberg. Erdmann, being one of the Pückler family names, was used as an obvious clue. The two men exchange ghost stories, tales of black magic and supernatural adventure,

whilst the mystery surrounding them thickens, and an uncanny sensation that all this really happened to the author will not be denied. Rosenberg recounts to Erdmann at dead of night how his first love, Lottchen, was seduced and ruined by a vicious nobleman. The Count listens, becoming even paler; it is clear that he was the offender—that is to say, Pückler himself, who yet figures in the story as Rosenberg, the hero whom Erdmann had betrayed. The Count was Pückler at thirty years of age on his return from England, in 1815; Rosenberg was Hermann at twenty-one, setting out on his travels. Some of the letters in his 1806 diary were used in this story under slightly different dates. The conception was undoubtedly subtle; it had been worked out on a recipe given to the author by Leopold Schefer, but its value lies in the reality of the experience behind it. The seduction breaks off tantalisingly at the most interesting point; but the process itself is ably described, and Erdmann's remorse, although magnified and distorted in the Hoffmannesque manner, is almost frighteningly real. Before the tale of Lottchen comes to an end the listener mysteriously disappears, and Pückler settles down to a more pedestrian relation of real facts. The sojourn at Kurbo with his ghostly *Doppelgänger* remains the outstanding adventure of the book; for the meeting between Pückler-Muskau and Graf Erdmann—between Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde—was a terrible spiritual experience—the projection without himself of the sinister side of his nature, whilst the other pronounced the anathema: “*J'accuse.*”

The Erdmann *motif* persists throughout the second and third volumes of *Südöstlicher Bildersaal*, in which fact and fancy are so inextricably mingled that Pückler alone could disentangle them satisfactorily. Norma, the black spaniel, a most uncanny guardian angel, is a mysterious gift from Erdmann, who now plays a benevolent part in what becomes an ever more lurid tale. He is last seen *in extremis* on the island of Ithaca, where he presents Rosenberg with a written confession full of solemn warnings and advice. There appears on the scene an Erdmann II., the son of Erdmann and Lottchen, far more wicked and sinister than his sire, whom he impersonates throughout the tale, but who eventually foils his diabolical schemes. A lovely Greek page-boy, called Dimitri, in league with the infernal powers, further complicates the intrigue; and a divinely beautiful, weird and fateful woman, Sara Namor, the daughter of Lottchen by an English lord, is the heroine of a story which makes one's senses reel. It was the romantic expression of two strong spiritual conflicts. Pückler was apparently experiencing excruciating remorse at his own behaviour in the part of *tertium quid*. In the story Rosenberg withstands a terrible temptation, escaping thereby from an unthinkable peril which threatened both himself and his beloved. The symbolism is as clear as daylight. The fact that the author associated danger and sin with love for a married woman is an index of the nature of his passion. It was phenomenally, even devastatingly, strong; but it was romantic and sentimental as well—the kind of love he had felt as a youth for Frau

von Alopäus, and which is greater than desire. It is also possible that the husband who stood between them was the object of real regard, for this was a motive which occasionally caused him to halt on his lawless ways.

There were many women occupying Pückler's thoughts at this time; most of them probably contributed some feature to the portrait of Sara Namor, who is painted with the burning colours of a passion felt for one. The English lady in Tunis was now rather pale in his memory; but she had corresponded to his mental image of Sara Austin, and was therefore partly responsible for the heroine's Christian name. The real sponsor, who had repented of her spiritual backslidings in agony and tears, may, as she stood wailing by the font, have summoned virtue to her godchild's aid. Tersitza, with her romantically tragic past, threw the glamour of an immortal sorrow round the figure of Sara Namor. Irene von Prokesch-Osten, whose heart-broken letters prove that she loyally resisted Pückler's passion, was married to a husband whom he liked in no common way. Lady Augusta Lyons had lured him to the shores of Greece, and was now waiting for *Südöstlicher Bildersaal* in a twitter of pleasurable alarm:

. . . with what trembling hands shall I open the pages of your new work and how my heart pants when I believe it possible that you may have condescended to mention me and mine.¹


¹ Unpublished; letter from Lady Lyons to Pückler; dated from H.M.S. *Pembroke*, April 10, 1839.

Like Mr Elton's charade, the figure of Sara Namor is a jumble which fits none of these women completely; but it is not without taste and truth. Its good taste lies in the absence of revealing details which might betray the woman he loved; its truth in the expression of his complete wretchedness, which was undeniably real.

The second conflict is apparent in the episode of Dimitri, the page. Once more Pückler is found associating a practice which had hitherto caused him no uneasiness, with danger and supernatural menace—that is to say, with sin. Whether the classical atmosphere of Greece was responsible for the introduction of this topic, or whether something of the kind occurred and unnerved him, it is impossible to say. But he went through a spiritual crisis in this matter in 1836, and conceived a profound distrust and fear for a former tendency in his nature.

Romance could do no more for Pückler; he stood convicted of guilt. Romanticism is the consciousness of disharmony. It sees the long shadow of sorrow cast by one happy hour; beneath the rosy flesh of beauty it discerns the skeleton of decay; behind triumphant and glorious life stalks the conqueror death; in the blood-red heart of the flower of love lies coiled the adder called sin. Following the road of romance, gay and debonair, he had ventured too far into the wood. Festering beauty and rotting life encompassed him about; wherever he looked he saw evil and felt that he had sinned.

Surrounded by falling ruins, he was aware for the first time that loveliness will moulder and that there



is corruption in the flesh. He fell into the most romantic of all moods, he was shaken by remorse. He who had come to Greece as an unregenerate pagan underwent a surprising temporary change: he looked on his present and his past with horror-stricken eyes; he denied the only god he knew, light-hearted, conquering, ubiquitous love. This is the spiritual significance of his wild and turgid tale. Arrived in the centre of the maze at length, he raised a contorted temple to the goddess of remorse.

The story by which he tried to express this feeling has no æsthetic worth, and was the last of its kind. The reiterated attempt to give his secret life an artistic expression had failed; it was not in his power to create beauty at the bidding of remorse. This emotion is indeed negative and destructive in its essence; but its dynamic force is great, it fain would find a way. Jealousy and remorse cannot wait for the lapse of time to express themselves; they will out in stabbings or confessions on the spot. A writer may rid himself of these passions by giving them literary form; but an artist will wait for the storms to pass before he begins to create. Pückler belonged to the type of men who write to relieve their minds, and write at once. Hence the curious anomaly that a man, freer than most from contrition and self-reproach, should have expressed these feelings constantly in his imaginary tales, where they assumed fantastic and distorted shapes, causing him, however, an emotional relief, to which he referred more than once. He was artist enough to abandon Hoffmann's fourth-dimensional world when he saw

that it was not truly his own ; his creative instinct was travelling along another and a more satisfying road.

Bound by the conventions of his class, he had conquered the impulse towards unvarnished self-revelation ; a realist at heart, he had failed lamentably in the symbolical method of portraying passion and love. But, mercifully, love is not the whole of life. He expressed his titanic longings, his imperious need to create, in those parks where his vital and life-giving spirit could transform barren and sandy wastes into gardens that blossomed, and woods that murmured, and streams that flowed, where flowers and trees and water had been unknown before.

CHAPTER VII

THE TITAN

THE present-day inhabitants of Muskau declare that Pückler began to play at gardening before he was well out of long clothes. The hero of this apocryphal legend states more credibly that his passion for planting began to germinate at Uhyst. Each scholar was assigned a small patch of his own in the grounds of the Moravian school, one of the few pleasant things to be learned about it, an innovation probably due to the influence of Pestalozzi. Hermann adored his little plot; he was always prowling round it, meditating how to alter its shape and group its colours in another way. The moment he had hatched out such a scheme he would fling himself furiously upon his tools, wielding his hoe on one occasion with so much concentrated eagerness that he cut open the head of a schoolfellow. With stricken eyes he watched the blood bedewing his flowers—a sight which spoiled his pleasure in gardening for many a long day. Later he was inclined to see an evil omen for the victim in this incident, for the lad, hardly grown to manhood, shot himself for love. But it also presaged Pückler's future; he was to water his beloved gardens full often with blood and with tears.

Stronger and much more elemental than his

natural love of flowers was his kinship with the trees of the forest which had surrounded him from his birth :

Wood [said his father bitterly in 1804] is the soul of this property ; but if one is willing to let it go cheap, it is easy enough to sell. With my son's present views it is certain that if a Jew came along with £1000 he would let him dispose of the whole forest, and if this should be ruined, the manor would be lost for ever.¹

He had little knowledge of his son, to whom felling was always an agony, and who was so much enraged by the wanton mutilation of some young poplars by the Lake of Geneva that he judged capital punishment to be hardly severe enough for the perpetrators of such an outrage. This was an emotional outburst, for he did not particularly admire poplars, and was always conscious of depression when he wandered down an avenue of these trees. He was so much cut to the heart later by the accidental felling of a clump of elders on his own estate that the man who was responsible for the mistake ran for his life after one glance at his master's face. He did well, Pückler acknowledged grimly ; for he would doubtless have killed him if he had caught him before his grief and anger had had time to cool. This tree-worship may have originated in a prehistoric cult which was deeply rooted in the age-old soil of his little kingdom.

Muskau, once Muzakov, "the town of men,"

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, iv., p. 341 ; letter from Pückler's father to the high constable of the district ; not dated.

had been a famous resort for pilgrims in the heathen days of the Sorbs or Wends, a race of Slavonic origin which still persists to-day. There were four temples in the oak-groves then, where the image of Swantetit, "the holy light, the holy fire," was worshipped, who knows with what dread rites. The Sorbs were forcibly converted to Christianity in 1060 under Lewis the Pious; but the ancient faith and the old observances continued secretly for many centuries in the almost impenetrable forests. Strange legends and customs are even yet abroad in Muskau, where trees are still regarded as somehow set apart. The curious and violent history of the land seems to stand in some occult relationship with that hoary god of fire whose influence lingered for so long after it had been publicly disowned. The Margrave John, son of Siegfried of the Saint Genoveva legend, built the castle of Muskau as a fortress. It was razed to the ground and the town destroyed by the Tartars in a terrible battle in 1241. They were erected again, and once more demolished by the Hussites. Tiefenbach burned all the surrounding villages in the Thirty Years War, the town and castle were plundered by the Croats, and Wallenstein lay for several days with the Imperial army in the barony in 1633. Shortly afterwards the forest was set alight, and burned for six weeks. The new castle also was consumed by fire owing to the carelessness of the Swedes, and was finally rebuilt on a larger and more pretentious scale by Pückler's maternal grandfather. The town itself was burned to the ground more than once after the Thirty Years War

and laid in ashes in 1766. With such a history behind them, the present-day Sorbs may be forgiven for their superstitious dread of fire. They "refuse to burn in their stoves the wood of trees that have been struck by lightning; they say that with such fuel the house would be burnt down."¹

Dilapidated but fairly extensive forests still survived in Pückler's day, trees tenaciously persisting in calcinated wastes; they worked their will on the lord of Muskau, and summoned him to their aid. In his desire to succour them he became one of the great landscape-gardeners of the age. The material at his disposal was far from inspiring. The land was insufficiently watered, the soil unfavourable, and the estate had been laid out in a manner most unpleasing to the eye. A formidable amount of destruction must be accomplished and much property must be purchased before anything could be done. Pückler faced his subjects with an ultimatum on May 1, 1815. Either they would sell the land he required at reasonable rates, to be fixed by arbitration—in which case he made himself responsible for the re-erection of three of the most important buildings destroyed by the fire in 1766—or he was unalterably resolved to leave Muskau for ever, and withdraw his favour from the stubborn inhabitants, thus depriving them of all the benefits which his schemes and his money would procure. They were brave words and true. The citizens of Muskau bowed to his will; far from them any desire to thwart their

¹ Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*.

beloved ruler. The feudal tradition was so strong that they unhesitatingly accepted payment in pieces of stamped leather, which was honoured at sight wherever Pückler was lord. Thus, heartened by the support of his devoted vassals, the landscape-gardener set to work. It is recounted by Ludmilla Assing and others, with awe, that Goethe encouraged him in his efforts in 1811, before they had well begun. "Follow this direction," the great man said, "you appear to have some talent for it." This was certainly no overstatement; and the sage advice, although heeded, was not needed. The wisest counsellors could not have cured Pückler of his obsession, of his torment, of his delight.

His feeling for Muskau was dual in its nature as early as 1822, and probably long before, for he had hated it as a child. It still oppressed him so much that he was hardly ever happy at home. Muskau was his evil star, a disastrous possession, he maintained, and a source of endless misery. And yet it absorbed him to such an extent that fatigue was ignored, labour became a rapture, and time was annihilated when the mood to create was upon him. This was his real profession, he then declared, and his only true pleasure. If he must give up landscape-gardening, life would lose all meaning and interest.

He was experiencing the emotions of the artist at grips with a rebellious and capricious medium. For if the mechanism of every art represents the stubborn resistance of matter to the dynamic force of mind, Pückler had to contend with the living organism of nature, who must be coaxed or bullied into partnership.



VIEW OF MUSKAU : THE NEISSE.

Like architecture in this, the execution of landscape-gardening is heart-breakingly slow, dependent as well on an army of workmen, each one a potential menace to the scheme, and on a multiplicity of tools and devices which do not hamper the *technique* of other arts to anything like the same degree. In addition it stands within the immediate danger of seasons, of weather, of chance and of change. If architecture is even more complicated and costly it has a certain permanence; whereas parks and gardens are always at the mercy of every kind of natural destruction; for behind them is the virgin forest fighting to come back.

When Pückler looked at Muskau as a work of art in the making he rejoiced in his own strength; when he struggled with it as a medium he felt antagonism and despair; when he saw it as it was, and recognised the harrowing distance between dreams and their fulfilment, he was conscious of a profound dismay, arriving in the end at the disdainful coldness with which the artist confronts his creation. For the final form is but a cipher; to remember the experience which produced it is to acknowledge a pitiful failure. No one perhaps ever felt this more keenly than Pückler, with his stormy heart.

He could not shake off the spell which he was weaving into Muskau and which had caught him in its web. He dreamt of it in England as he wandered among masterpieces in his own line which he despaired of equalling. The trees at home would not be denied, for the incautious confession which brought Bettina hot-foot to the castle was literally

true. Muskau was the story of his life, he told Sophie Gay. The books which he was now writing half contemptuously were fodder for his park. It was the feeble expression of his poetic thoughts in rivers, trees and meadows, he confessed to Varnhagen; he also knew some happy moments when he felt that he would endure in his creation :

Think what my life would have been, and what I should have been without this creative work.— Nothing. Whereas even now . . . I can die with the reassuring thought that I have not vegetated like a cabbage, but shall leave something behind me which may cause my name to be mentioned for centuries with honour and love.¹

Muskau was already famous for its beauty when he wrote those lines. Royal personages came to see it, and consulted Pückler about the laying out of their own estates. Articles were written about it in the papers, and the artist was preparing a book on landscape-gardening, published in 1835, with lovely illustrations of the paradise he had planned. Nevertheless it was always wringing his heart. The barrenness of the country, the ungrateful soil, the lack of picturesque scenery to frame his work of art caused him increasing mortification, and unceasing disgust. A great painter condemned to a child's colour-box and picture-book would feel much the same hopelessness and rancour towards his materials.

It was even worse than this. Muskau had witnessed the Babylonian captivity of his childhood, and had

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, vii., p. 240; letter from Pückler to Lucie; dated from Muskau, November 8, 1832.

now become an active menace to his personal liberty, which he prized above fame and art. Restlessly wandering in his enchanted park, he revolved the means to escape; one mighty effort and he had broken loose, spiritually free from his home at last. Its power was destroyed and would never hold sway in his heart again; but trees marched with him during the following six years, whispering their irresistible commands. Wherever he saw them, beautiful and green, he swore to come back and live. This was not mere empty talk. Enchanted with the loveliness of Kyparissia, he negotiated with the Greek Government to purchase it. King Otto offered it to him as a gift on condition that he should contribute £1500 to its improvement. Pückler accepted with delight. He spent some glorious days in November 1836 enclosing the estate, almost beside himself with enthusiasm for the wonderful scenery of this romantic spot. All Mistra turned out to welcome the future owner, whom they treated as a suzerain lord. It really seemed as if one of the dearest wishes of his heart were at length to be fulfilled, a canvas to work upon which should be worthy of his powers. But the scheme fell through later owing to a change in the Government. Kyparissia was not a great prize in the lottery, as he had once confidently hoped; only a "gaily coloured soap-bubble" which had dissolved like so many of his waking dreams.

Meanwhile the trees in Muskau were waiting, wondering if he would return. They had a strong ally in Lucie. He came back finally and threw himself once more into planting, with a kind

of desperate rage. Muskau would never cause him pleasure again, but it was still capable of lacerating his heart. The spring of 1841 added yet another sorrow to his sorely stricken soul, for it revealed the apparently terrible devastation wrought in the park by the drastic felling accomplished by Rehder in Pückler's absence. Rehder was the head gardener and knew what he was about; time has completely absolved him from the bitter blame which he met with then, but Pückler never quite forgave him for the sight which greeted his eyes that spring :

Imagine my horror as I became convinced that the insane manner in which the felling has been undertaken has everywhere disfigured and destroyed half of the park and also part of the pleasure-ground much more terribly than the greatest calamities in the shape of storm, or fire, or flood could possibly have done.¹

The devastation wrought by Rehder in my poor creation is unhappily indescribable, and I am convinced that my illness was chiefly due to the terrible sorrow which such incredible folly, composed of the greatest conceit and stupidity combined, inevitably caused me. I only wish you were here in the truly admirable glory of this spring to see with your own eyes in ironical juxtaposition what God has done, and what Rehder, and to lose your reason at the sight, as I do. Only the most violent pain and the greatest weakness hindered me from taking flight at once and perhaps for ever; for there is a limit to what one can bear.²

¹ Unpublished; letter from Pückler to Lucie; dated from Muskau, May 2, 1841.

² Unpublished; letter from Pückler to Lucie; dated from Muskau, May 9, 1841.



VIEW OF MUSKAU : THE PARK.

Pückler's sense of the service he owed nature was so strong that he spent £15,000 on Muskau during the negotiations with Nostitz and Hatzfeld; he also left timber standing which he might have sold at great personal profit because he could not bring himself to dim the glory of the forests. He revisited his birthplace only once, in 1863, by which time it belonged to Frederick of the Netherlands, who had indeed acquired it as early as 1846.¹ He was disinterestedly delighted to see that time had done to his conception what he had meant that it should; but he was untouched by the slightest desire to possess it again. It belonged to a stormy and terrible past, which he never willingly recalled.

The artist would probably have lain *perdu* for many years after 1845 if he had been left alone. But he had set a fashion and created a demand. The Prince and Princess of Prussia insisted on his co-operation in the planning of Babelsberg; his advice was required at Weimar and at Hanover; the Duchess of Dino demanded his help at Sagan; Napoleon III. consulted him about the Bois de Boulogne. Trees, stretching out their branches, caught him in their toils again. He began to hanker after a place of his own, a rare and perfect pearl, an ideal "cottage" in romantic surroundings. In 1848 he all but completed the purchase of an estate on the island of Eubœa; in 1850 he began to negotiate for some property near Salzburg; but before these dates he had already given in to Lucie and was planting in Branitz. This was a barren

¹ It is now in possession of the Count and Countess of Arnim.

and neglected family estate in complete disrepair. Pückler's father had left it for Muskau on his marriage, since when nothing had been done for it. There was little indeed in its favour as a residence beyond the fact that it had been in the family for several generations. Lucie, oppressed by the feeling that the loss of Muskau meant the loss of caste, decided to settle in Branitz, and nothing would satisfy her until at length she prevailed upon Pückler to beautify it. He refused roundly at first: he hated the monotony and sterility of the surrounding country; he felt an almost insurmountable distaste at the thought of repeating the dreary tragi-comedy of attempting a work of art with such materials. But Lucie, wailing that she was homeless, carried her point in the end. He began with several back-slidings in 1846; before the year was over he was on fire. His single-minded devotion to Branitz became greater than his interest in Muskau had ever been. The visions of his old age were no longer darkened by the depressing struggle against financial odds; on the contrary they had, especially later, the uplifting character of a gallant race against time. In 1864 a scheme was afoot to run a railway line through his park. Pückler resolved, if this vandalism were perpetrated, to leave Branitz "at once and for ever"; but the King of Prussia intervened. The octogenarian was left to plant in peace.

The rogue had gone to earth in 1833 and never reappeared; after Macbuba's death the uttermost parts of the world called to the rover in vain; the rake still burned in the flames of desire; the hero

had suffered a change; the dead man ceased to pretend to exist after 1848; but the dreams of the artist gave Pückler no rest, and the Titan laboured on. He knew the exhilaration of mastering the elements and the abject humiliation of being their slave; he went through the furnace of disintegrating despair, but he achieved at length the dispassionate resignation which rewards the partial and dearly bought victories of the human race:

Art is the highest and the noblest thing in life, for it is *creation for the service of mankind*. As far as I was able, I have done this in the realm of nature all my life.¹

The traveller who visits Muskau after having experienced in the artist's letters the shattering storms and the tragic lulls which accompanied its creation will marvel at the result, for it distils an atmosphere of wise acceptance, chastened regret and poignant peace. It seems strange indeed that a man so restless and undisciplined, who lived so hard and behaved so recklessly, should have achieved just this effect of harmonious beauty, stateliness and grace. And that a man too — so eccentric in his private life, so much drawn towards the *baroque* and its twin-brother the *macabre*, who could not withstand the exotic and fantastic in nature and art, and for whom the crowning touch of personal elegance was a cane surmounted by a lorgnette—that such a man should have conceived so dignified and so

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, ix., p. 367; diary for December 1870; this is the last entry in his journal.

simple a work of art is also no small cause for amazement.

The flower gardens in Muskau certainly reflected a far from impeccable taste, which probably also ran riot in the interior decoration of the castle. The architectural designs and schemes, happily for the most part unrealised, were based on the pseudo-classicism of an age much addicted to incongruous symbolical artifice; whilst the hermit who in the early days inhabited the hermitage and the *rococo* shepherd who was to have borne him company are concrete instances of the childish love of make-believe which he never quite outgrew. But the cornucopia in the flower garden and the long-nosed anchorite in his cell have disappeared; the temples, the Gothic ruins and the statues never materialised; the performing elephant quaffing brandy was not bought after all. Much water has flowed under many bridges since Pückler ceased from playing; the enduring work of beauty remains.

There were brightly coloured parrots in the conservatory but no exotic trees in the park, for his capricious freakishness forsook him when he was occupied with trees. Under the spell of their loveliness he penetrated to the essence of their being, divining and creating propitious conditions, natural and admirable groupings, the most satisfying effect of harmonies in colour, light and shade. The park at Muskau is neither startling nor monotonous; seemingly simple it yet has the glamour of mystery, half revealing but ultimately withholding its secrets, oracularly dreaming on the past.

Pückler was deeply and consciously aware of the history of his land. It had bequeathed to him hills which were a legacy of remote geological revolutions before the existence of man. It had assigned to him some hundreds of veteran limes and oaks, heroes of countless legends, deities of a pre-Christian cult. The waters of the Neisse were haunted by an elemental banshee, and ran through a valley which the people still called "The Bitter Valley of Tears." The soil harboured hidden treasure, it was said, which a mysterious stranger had come to seek. It gave up one day the bleached skeleton of an unknown man who had met a violent end. Grim tales were told in Muskau of slaughter and fire, romantic stories of lovers and death. This legendary mood communicated itself to the creator of the park; he read, he pondered, he listened, he mused. The trees stand now like runic signs chronicling the history of the soil: giant oaks and limes and elms; maples and sycamores; birches, poplars, beeches of both shades; magnolias and tulip-trees; acacias, willows and Douglas firs, with here and there a cypress and a larch—all initiates of a great freemasonry, guarding and interpreting the past.

The streams and lakes which Pückler deflected from the main course of the Neisse contribute, with this river, movement and light to the lawns, the meadows and the woods. The beckoning of still waters, the cajoling quality of running brooks, the enlivening effect of waterfalls and cataracts add a gracious and subtly feminine element to the majesty and the stateliness of the trees. The views of fir-clad

slopes and blue hills in the distance, of the little town of Muskau visible at times, have drawn the whole surrounding district into the picture of this park. But the castle at the entrance, built by Pückler's grandfather in the florid Renaissance style, is a serious and disfiguring blot on an otherwise perfect landscape. He did not feel it as such himself; and as it was painted white in his time, and overgrown with creepers, it probably seemed less glaring and discordant. To-day it stands naked, a magenta-pink nightmare monster which bars the way to the enchanted gardens beyond.

The social graces of the eighteenth century are held in solution in the formal perfection, the exquisite tact, the polished manners of the paths and roads, which lead, unobtrusively and nonchalantly, towards fine views, magnificent groups of timber, dreaming lakes and chiming waterfalls; whilst the art of composition, inherent in that age, with its sceptical realisation of relative values, has endowed this creation, so tumultuously begot, so passionately conceived, with a restraint and sobriety almost wistful in their effect.

The strange peace which emanates from Muskau will rarely have remained unshattered when the artist was there himself; it was a quality which fled from his presence as darkness flies before light. A thousand waves and ripples will have broken it every hour: the thudding of axes and the deep tones of command; the disturbing restless whispering of long silk skirts. The gardener's boy, an idle youth, leans his chin on his spade and dreams. A shot rings



VIEW OF MUSKAU : PLEASURE GROUND NEAR THE CASTLE.

out from the castle and the implement clatters to the ground. Pückler has aimed dead-straight from a distant window; the lad is at work again. Then silence for a space; the park sinks back into repose. But not for long; the sharp crack of a whip is heard and the thundering of hoofs, cries of alarm, an elfin peal of mischievous mirth. A phaeton comes into view and races past, rocking and swaying on oval wheels, white faces in the rear, a devil-may-care driver in front urging the maddened horses to their utmost speed. Pückler it is. The guests are self-invited, and the vehicle was designed, ordered and built to induce them to take a speedy departure and never to return. They flash past and are gone: gone the laughter, gone the protests, gone the wayward spirit which produced them; the park, the magic park, dreams on.

The artistic conception triumphant in Muskau was conquered in the singularly different park of Branitz by the creative force which brought it into being. Pückler had no canvas to work upon there; he was conjuring, as he put it, an oasis from the desert, thinking as he worked almost solely of the present, and more concerned with the effort of breathing life into dry bones than with the consummation of a work of art. His time was growing short, and his passion for planting, far from decreasing with age, was becoming greater and less reasoned. He was anxious to ensure an immediate effect, and planted thickly in order to realise his conception at once; then came the dread necessity of thinning out, and he shied away from radical measures. The selection demanded by art is

perhaps nowhere more imperative than in landscape-gardening, and certainly nowhere else so cruel, since it calls for the destruction of present beauty for the sake of the beauty which is to be. Pückler's primitive feeling for trees led to painful internal struggles every time he was forced to fell them; the victory had hitherto gone to the artist, now it went to the man. Hating to slay the creatures he had planted, haunted by the fear that he would not live to see the final result, he sacrificed the lasting to the transient, and made of Branitz something vaguely mournful, less completely satisfying than Muskau, less spacious, less restful and less grand. But it has a peculiarly intimate charm, creeping closely up round the terraced castle with its walled-in garden, a gracious square-built house, beautiful in itself.

He furnished it interestingly and individually, but by no means pretentiously; whereas the moated and castellated halls of Muskau probably witnessed some startling decorative effects. The ground floor of Branitz remains as Pückler left it when he died: in the beautifully proportioned panelled entrance hall hang his ancestral portraits; on one side the *spirituel* Callenbergs, gallant and gay; on the other the sombre, resolute, rather heavy Pücklers. The dignified and comfortable library is lined with yellow-brown books, and contains a portrait of Lucie, revealing a stubborn chin and steady demanding eyes. The dining-room is magnificent with the pomp of a bygone age; there are stiff fading brocades in the music-room, and some fantastic apartments in which eccentricity is given its due. In one of these is to

be found a portrait of the famous owner, taken when he was hardly more than a lad, his deep blue eyes so radiant and so intently vital that one meets them with a shock. All this is an excellent introduction to the park that lies without.

Here, unlike Muskau, are to be found evidences of the eccentric and the *macabre*: a more personal note, less artistic control and possibly greater dreams; exotic trees and shrubs, romantic melancholy firs, dim vistas, secret woods. A grass tumulus springs into view, alien and grotesque, but striking a preliminary note; for a little farther on glimmers a large sheet of water lapping round the base of a great green pyramid overgrown with bracken. "Tombs are the mountain-tops of a distant lovely land," runs the sentence in the Koran which inflamed Pückler with the desire to raise this sepulchre to himself. In spite of the well-nigh foolhardy challenge underlying his choice of form, the pyramid reflected in the water produces an effect of sheer witchery that confounds the critical sense. An inner conviction of a strange greatness in the man who built it will not be denied; and some words in a letter to Lucie—"Oh, what a shame, if I died before it were finished!"—echo in the air with the genuine ring of a spirit so gallantly poised that it could play at games of make-believe with the fell sergeant, death.

Nevertheless the pyramid adds a weirdness to the landscape which is more suggestive than artistic. And indeed the queerness of Branitz, disturbing and appealing, is its main characteristic as contrasted with the peace and simplicity of Muskau. The

strange doings in the castle have somehow leaked out into the grounds; it is impossible to forget them. When the wind blew and Billy exclaimed: "How I should like to fly!" Ludmilla Assing felt her heart beat faster, and wondered whether he would, for Branitz seemed to her a place where anything might be expected to happen. Then as she looked out of her window and saw the old Prince fantastically dressed in 'Turkish clothes, shuffling along with dragging steps, a parasol in his hand, the dwarf tripping beside him and attendants in the rear, she was sure that he must be a magician and that she was taking part in a fairy tale. Branitz still seems bewitched to-day, though the hoary enchanter is now buried out of sight, though the dwarf and the lovely maidens have departed, and though Pückler's aberrant course is run. But he dominates the park from his pyramid, and the spell is not broken yet.

* * *

No! penury, inertness and grimace,
In some strange sort, were the land's portion. "See
Or shut your eyes"—said Nature peevishly—
"It nothing skills: I cannot help my case."

The short journey in the little local train from Weisswasser to Muskau shows how unwilling an ally Pückler had in Nature for his far-reaching schemes. It is true that she supplied him with a hilly region and a fir-clad district, the river Neisse, and some ancient oaks and limes; but for the rest a dry white sandy soil, hard and clayey in the vicinity of the park, rows upon rows of *triste* and monotonous



THE PYRAMID IN BRANITZ.

conifers—nothing significant, nothing that was great. In Branitz she did even less; for here there was no water except in the subsoil, no trees at all in the district, and not a single hill. It would be a heavy task to recount in detail the operations undertaken by Pückler at the bidding of his urgent desire to create. He transported a street in Muskau; he removed a whole village from the right to the left bank of the Neisse; he blew up the battlement walls with gunpowder; deflected streams from the river; dug, trenched, fertilised and manured the soil; transplanted full-grown trees as well as saplings, many of which came from a great distance, thousands of them marching at his behest; water was stamped out of the earth in Branitz; meadow grass and lawns sprang up in the wilderness; flowers bloomed in the place of dock-leaves and nettles. Everywhere the seeds of life were scattered; everywhere the seeds took root. In the teeth of a peevishly disposed and ungrateful Nature he worked his fertilising will. It is this which makes of his parks something transcending art. Were one in ignorance of the facts, the trees would still seem abnormally large and, even when too closely planted, as in Branitz, of an unusual perfection of growth; one would argue a most favourable soil, applauding the might of Nature and the greatness of her works. But it was to a very large extent Pückler alone who bid these magnificent trees to grow and the grass to bloom. In the virgin forests of America, and in tropical lands, trees are probably larger than those to be found in Muskau and Branitz; but in temperate zones they will hardly be

matched, certainly not surpassed as a whole ; so many of them, and all so perfect and so great, growing in a soil which had to be prepared artificially, most of them transplanted from their natural surroundings, flourishing, beautiful, immense. It can have been no ordinary life-giving power which produced such a result ; no common propagating instinct which made the planting times such triumphant, all-absorbing periods in Pückler's life ; no measurable driving-force which communicated itself to the inhabitants of Muskau and transformed inert and listless labourers into an almost Dionysian crew. Tales are still told in his native town of the furious energy with which he inspired his workmen ; how old men and women laboured eagerly, frantically, in his park ; whilst the soil changed its nature at the command of an inexperienced but inspired *amateur*, who himself performed hard manual labour and was personally present at the planting of every tree.

The creator can never be separated from the artist ; but when the vitalising instinct predominates the æsthetic instinct plays a subordinate part. And although Pückler was no mean artist, it was his power to call forth life which seems, in view of his achievements, to be the most striking gift he possessed. He was destined to struggle titanically against rebellious matter : he knew this himself, but the struggle, which should have been a great one, was dwarfed by his inadequate means ; he felt that he had spent his life in puny efforts which had resulted in mere houses of cards and not the pyramids of his dreams :

I know that if a magician could grant me a million or even half a million monthly I could accomplish things which would represent the hitherto unheard-of in art, which could only be destroyed with the globe, and in addition transform whole deserts into paradises and advance some aspects of science perhaps by a thousand years. . . . How willingly would I lead the simplest, even an almost necessitous personal life, if my spirit might bathe itself in the rapture of such creation as this . . . nature has given me a great power, but without the means to develop it. . . . I am too full of piety towards the All-Mother Nature to be ungrateful or discontented. But I grieve for myself that I could not exercise these specific powers, and was yet forced to measure everything by so immeasurable a standard.¹

Let no one think that this is the language of megalomania. A victim of this disease would have exaggerated what he had done and would not have looked upon Muskau and Branitz as houses of cards. Pückler's dreams were vast; but who shall say, after seeing what he accomplished in the face of stupendous difficulties, that he could not have realised his visions had the wealth of the Rothschilds been his? There was something incommensurable in his spirit, something Promethean in his nature, something elemental in the force which drove him; he was, potentially, much greater than the common run of men; he was, actually, strangely different. He was related to Nature as a medium is related to his control; she expressed herself through him, he

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, iv., pp. 32-33; letter to Ludmilla Assing; dated January 5, 1860.

performed her commands. And if we all are the instruments of the spirit of life, few of us attain to the partnership in creation to which Pückler was born ; few are given such a profusion of seeds to scatter ; few indeed are granted the power so to make them grow.

But beneath this apparent triumph there lies a failure which is greater than the success. To ensure its perpetuity the instinct of life has implanted everywhere an exuberant desire to increase and multiply, in order that, amidst all the hazards and perils which threaten to destroy the individual, the type may eternally be reborn. In man the propagating instinct is for the most part greater than his philo-progenitive needs ; when the disharmony between them becomes apparent, the primitive desire is sublimated and works creatively in the spiritual sphere. Nature will be indifferent to such efforts at the best, since the begetting of philosophy, science and art is no part of her plan ; at the worst she may resent the conquest of the flesh and exact a merciless revenge. So runs a famous mythological conception of the mysterious ways of life.

Pückler might figure in story as the ill-starred hero of this tragic myth. Surcharged with the procreative instinct he would leave the arms of a woman to place his unsatisfied desires at the service of the force which was goading him on. But even Life could not use to the full the power with which she had endowed him ; arrested in mid-career, it was translated to the spiritual plane, where it suggested such dreams and visions as must break the stoutest heart to see and not to realise.



A TREE IN MUSKAU.

It was a broken man who towards the end of his days wrote the lines transcribed above. His illimitable desires had rent his heart. But Life, who demands so much less of man than he would wring from her, was content that it should be so. Puissant still, she smiles her enigmatic smile in Muskau, and whispers: "I am eternal, I am infinite, I am in the right."

CHAPTER VIII

THE LINE OF FATE

THE ill-famed Count Saint-Germain, miracle-monger, alchemist and charlatan, who possessed some strange power over the minds of his contemporaries, was one of Pückler's earliest memories. He was a visitor at the castle of Muskau, and paid fantastic court to the young mother of Hermann and to her eldest son, a "Sunday's child."¹ He warned this nursling solemnly against the infernal powers. "They stand near you and desire you," he informed the impressionable little boy, with a contagious fear in his eyes. Pückler always had an animating effect on fortune-tellers of all descriptions; they recognised a kindred spirit in him. Lady Hester Stanhope is the most impressive instance; but Saint-Germain, Gall, Deville and countless humbler members of the soothsaying profession felt the stirring of genuine vision when he sought them out, as he constantly did. It was not merely because he was credulous and gave himself away that their messages were often so appropriate and their knowledge so remarkably accurate; for this could only help them to gauge the present, the past and his character. There was some influence

¹ A child born on Sunday is popularly supposed in Germany to possess the gift of second sight. Pückler and Heine were both very proud of this distinction.

emanating from him which inspired the gipsy race to read the future aright. There is more than a hint of danger in such psychic power. Pückler was perpetually aware of evil spirits besetting his path. Death and the devil are phantoms, he once said, ever lying in wait to pounce on the imagination. He spoke from experience. The night-side of existence had a perilous fascination for him. He loved the midnight hours more than was normal, for he felt that his real life was born anew at every setting of the sun. Ghost-stories, tales of black magic and devil-worship affected him too much. Table-rappings, evil omens, prophecies and dreams worked violently in his imagination. He had an unconquerable, fearful interest in corpses, skeletons, gallows, murderers—death in every shape and form. He investigated magnetism, mesmerism, somnambulism, astrology, necromancy and the evil eye with the avidity of one who was predestined to believe. The desire to fathom the dark unknown, which he felt to be so near, drove him to explore all the spiritual by-roads within his ken; for he burned to consult the sibyl called Fate and to wrest her secret from the Sphinx. He neglected none of the revealed religions in his quest, however prosaic, however fantastic they might be; and he dearly loved Catholicism, for reasons which are not far to seek. But he was never an orthodox believer; no creed could satisfy his wants.

He lived on the borderland of reality: he heard music in his dreams; he beheld a glorious vision of a heavenly city once in a trance-like state. Natural phenomena often took on a miraculous quality in his

eyes. Mourning the death of a beloved cockatoo whilst the wind howled with dreadful melancholy outside, he was suddenly transfixed by fear; it seemed as if some unthinkable monster were trying to force its way in. He travelled from Muskau to Bautzen in the summer of 1833 through lightning and storm, and thought to see in the dark panoply of clouds a horrible toad devouring the moon and engulfing the stars. The flies buzzing round him during a meal in the open air were transformed into millions of guests tastefully clad in black, a trifle importunate, perhaps, but with a lightness and grace which would put the greatest fop to the blush. He had the strangest dreams. He saw Rahel and Macbuba shortly after their death so vividly that he could have sworn they had really visited him in his sleep. His night-visions were often singularly symbolical, and so frightening at times that he confessed to an intimate understanding of Hamlet's terror of dreaming after death. And yet the rare mystical moments when the barrier between his wildly fluttering heart and the fierce rushing spirit of life seemed to dissolve were the most precious he knew. Side by side with his desire to savour the last drop in the cup of reality went a far more compelling love, "l'amour de ce qui n'est pas"; this was the answer to the riddle of his fundamentally unhappy life, he declared in 1859, when he stumbled upon that phrase in *Elle et Lui*:

C'est que constamment je n'ai aimé que ce qui n'est pas. Aucune réalité a pu me satisfaire, et si j'ai eu des moments vraiment heureux, qu'aucune

amertume ne suivait aussitôt, ce n'est qu'à la fantaisie que je les devais.¹

But his imagination was not always a source of delight; he realised that there was something dæmonic in the power it wielded over his mind, for although he was completely fearless physically, and unusually courageous spiritually, he could not rid himself of the feeling that he was the plaything of an ominous fate. This conviction made him one of the most superstitious of men. He attached an almost childish importance to the events which befell him on his birthday; he dreaded the years in which the "evil number" seven appeared; he was certain that Friday always brought him bad luck; he insisted on seeing Lady Hester Stanhope for the first time on a Sunday, a golden day; whereas Monday was as brown as a monk's hood, and Friday as black as night. He was thrown into a frantic state of mind in 1834 by losing a stick with the features of Dr Syntax carved on the handle, for he had somehow identified himself with this fetish. The loss of his "magic wand," the cane with the eyeglass, sadly depressed him in 1861; the Arabs had thought it most uncanny, and he felt that some virtue of his own had gone with it. All the more delightful was his surprise when his gracious sovereigns presented him with a facsimile of this talisman, embellished with the royal portraits and with the inscription "The magic wand of Branitz." He accumulated charms without number of one kind

¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, ix., pp. 302-303; diary of May 24, 1859.

and another; perhaps the most remarkable was a mud-stained rag from the garment Lola Montes had worn during the revolt in Munich, for he considered this unhappy woman a martyr and defended her against all comers. It is the hall-mark of the innately superstitious mind to attach an esoteric significance to material objects. Pückler gave many other proofs of this characteristic. He was often guided by presentiments. He abandoned a journey to Görlitz in 1843 because of a warning dream; Lucie was furious with him for changing his plans at the last moment, but stronger than his desire to appease her was his instinct to propitiate Fate—a course which he pursued doggedly throughout his conscious life. None of his burnt-offerings to this goddess had the slightest effect. He was doomed to take heed of trifles and to play at pitch-and-toss with fortune for colossal stakes; he was fey at all the great crises of his life.

Fate blinds those whom she would destroy. Little did Pückler think as he stormed the blue sky of pleasure in Dresden, recklessly climbing to the topmost peak of his world, shouting, waving and gesticulating to the applauding multitude below, that Fate was waiting to hurl him into a dungeon built of the stones dislodged by his upward rush, the flint and granite of debt. That Berserker mood of wild gaiety and irresponsibility was paid for by forty years of sordid cares and hampered freedom, during which the iron entered into his soul. The Titan was chained to a rock for life because youth cannot count the cost.

How could he know, in his half fantastic, wholly heart-free courtship of Lucie, that he was betraying his inmost self? Love never entered into his calculations; but Fate, attracted by his daring, struck straight into his heart. He bartered his freedom of soul unwittingly with a cynical jest on his lips; but the weird goddess laughed longer than the hero, for she knew he had a heart to be broken.

Unaware of a mysterious taboo and in the lightest mood he vaulted over the barrier between East and West, and broke a law of nature which decrees that they shall not meet. The torments of Tantalus fell to the rover's lot, and the rake slid slowly downhill.

Three times he challenged Fate blindfold, not knowing what he was about, and met with a venomous revenge. He had penetrated into those upper regions which are charged with electrical storms. Lightning flashed across the firmament and struck in: leaves and blossoms were scattered; the trunk was blasted and rent; even the roots were torn asunder. Fate had done her worst. A withered veteran stretched out defiant and accusing arms, but the sky was now serene.

The essential tragedy of Pückler's life lay deeper than these fortuitous encounters with chance. He was aware of a profound disharmony, a titanic struggle between two opposing forces in his soul. This manifested itself to onlookers as something dangerous in his nature. Lady Hester Stanhope considered him not only a great man, but one essentially different from all others. Baron von Voght realised how much his whole being was rooted in storms:

Pour vous, mon Prince, il vous faut des bornes à franchir, des obstacles à vaincre ; le ciel déchiré par les éclairs, les orages, les ouragans ont dû avoir un intérêt pour vous qui aimez les hauteurs escarpées entourées de précipices—il vous faut les *turgida vela* pour conduire la frêle nacelle de la vie à travers les écueils et les courants.¹

Bettina von Arnim, with uncanny penetration, looked even deeper and saw clearer still :

Yes, I believe that wilder storms rage in you, and that higher and greater possibilities are destroyed than one can understand or even guess at ; and that a mightier spirit for good must be within you, which bravely dares to lend a hand. I believe that a great and god-like nature is imprisoned in you, between cruel powers which are hard to fight against. . . . The opposition of evil and the power of sin is the element in which the divine is born.²

This tormenting dualism in his nature was obscurely felt by all who came into contact with Pückler, and it wrung his withers, but he could not explain it. A voracious and omnivorous reader, he was always on the look-out for some answer in philosophy, religion or his fellow-men which might solve the riddle of his life. He held a key in his hands when he turned the pages of his favourite philosopher, but he did not fit it into the lock.

According to Schopenhauer, Pückler was indeed a deeply guilty servant of the criminal Will to Live,

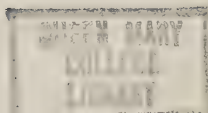
¹ *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher*, viii., p. 331 ; letter from Voght to Pückler ; dated from Hamburg, March 10, 1833.

² *Ibid.*, i., p. 169 ; letter from Bettina von Arnim to Pückler ; dated September 28, 1833.

which is sinful in its essence, disastrous in its manifestations, ruthless in its methods, and tragical in its results. Lucie had certainly taught him the dire effect on a fellow-individual of the assertion of one's own right to live, and he was subconsciously much swayed by that mysterious instinct which turns away from procreation as a betrayal of the race ; he was not often overruled by passion into passing on the germ of life. He early welcomed the idea of death and frequently longed for it ardently ; in a less rationalised manner he sought it actively ; his thoughts were ever turned towards it. In later years he consciously denied the Will to Live. Born to be a soldier in the army which fights for death, he had deserted to the other side because he also worshipped nature. Whichever may be the nobler cause in this primeval struggle, the jarring discord at the root of his being was due perhaps to the signal victories he gained for his natural foe against his liege lord, Death. It is the common lot ; Life tricks us all into performing her purposes, but not all are traitors in so doing. The notable services Pückler rendered to the Will to Live have the direful character of tragic guilt. But if this were so, he never discovered wherein he had sinned ; yet he realised that there was something calamitous in his nature, and in his last days he was overwhelmed by the fearful sensation that he was surrounded by spies.

Were they emissaries from the battalions of life or death who were waiting for his soul ? No ; in the last resort mythological explanations will not serve. They are mummery and flummery, which shrivel

before the loneliness of the human spirit. Man has no cosmic significance ; he can arouse no answering echo in the universe, and herein lies his tragic greatness. Pückler died at the last with a roguish twist of the lips, with a waggish and gallant smile.



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